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Frontier Times
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PUBLISHED IN THE WEST

August, 1969

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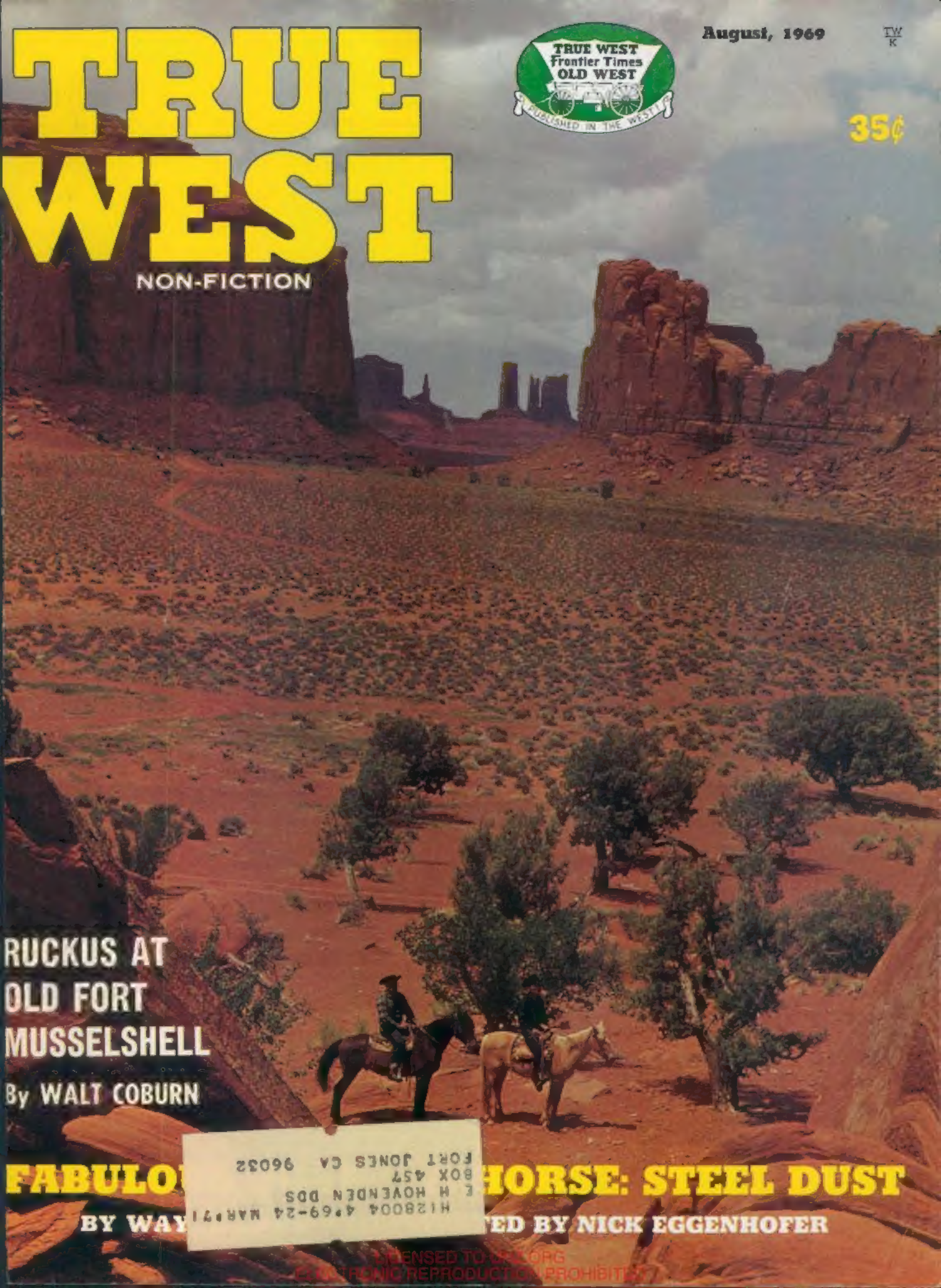

## RUCKUS AT OLD FORT MUSSELSHELL

By WALT COBURN

## FABULO HORSE: STEEL DUST

BY WAY ED BY NICK EGGENHOFER

H12B004 4*69-24 MAR*71
E H HOVENDEN DDS
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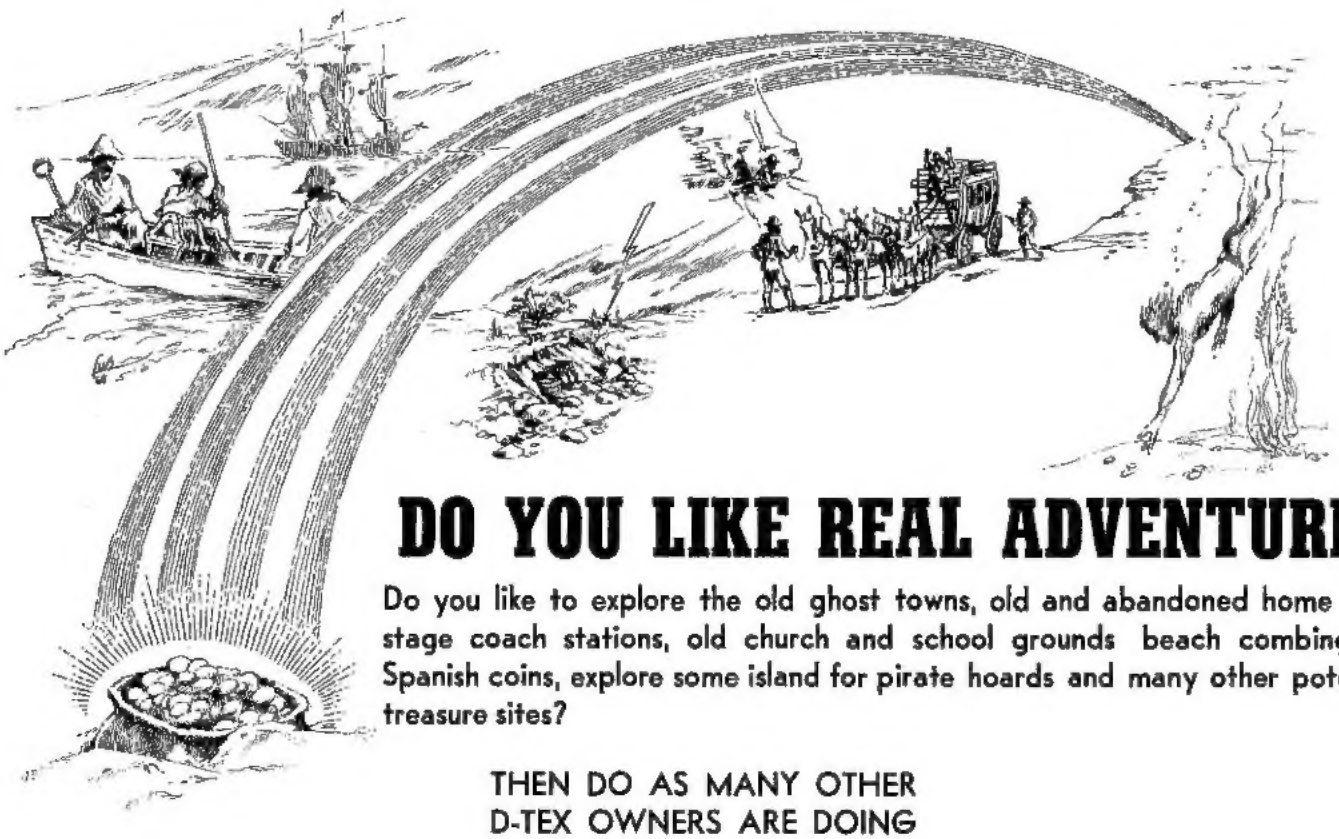

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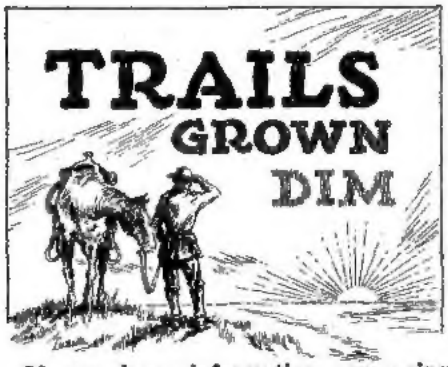


**If you have information concerning persons referred to below, do not write to us. Communicate directly with the letter writer.**

### Henry

Shortly after World War II, my oldest brother, Edward H. Henry, lit out for Idaho where he worked along the Snake River valley on the dams and water project under construction at that time. He would never write.

After my hitch in the Marine Corps, I accepted a job on the Washington, D. C. Police Department where I served for twenty-five years and then retired for disability received in line of duty. That was fifteen years ago. I had wanted for some time to go out to Idaho to see if I could locate Ed, but had little or no information to go on, except that regarding his work on the river projects. But I drove out that way last summer hoping I could pick up a little something. The old saw about death and taxes led me to check out those angles first. There was no death record in Boise's vital statistics bureau. The tax bureau said their records were confidential and they could tell me nothing. I tried the Social Security Office and got the same answer. I checked with several post offices up and down the valley—no soap. I had it broadcast on the radio station at Weiser, checked out a lot of rooming houses and former rooming house proprietors, local chamber of commerces, beer joints, restaurants, gas stations, and about every other place time would allow—nothing. His trail has really grown dim. Maybe a word or two in your magazine might refresh somebody's memory.

He should be past sixty-five now, white, about 5' 11", about 180 pounds, very low forehead, or did have. He may go by Dad's name of Hiram Edward Henry.—Robert M. Henry, P. O. Box 144, Mountain Home, Arkansas 72653

### Doan or Doane

Persons by the name of Doan or Doane or descendants of Doanes are invited to the 1969 reunion at Point Lookout, Missouri, August 7-10, 1969. For further particulars write Mrs. Robert (Darlene) Doane, 1969 National Reunion Chairman, Meadowwoods Road, Essex, Connecticut 02673

### Libeth Fideaux

We wish information about some people who lived in Pearl (or Pearlie), Kansas just outside Abilene around the last quarter of the 19th century, especially Libeth Fideaux, daughter of Very (nee Dexter) and Edouard (?) Fideaux. Libeth was born March 17, 1871. Her maternal grandmother was a full-blooded Kiowa Indian. Her Indian name was Chemendatata (Welcome One.) She had an Uncle Jud (Spotted Pony or Uncle Spotty) who lived in Perlie. Her friends were Caleb Johnson, Angie May Lister, Barney Bascomb, Royce Miller, Ferd Beck, and especially Minna Bumfries (middle name, Julie). She also mentioned Julia Jeanina Bitts, seamstress; Dancing Badger, the medicine man; and Emma and Jerome Jaekel, keepers of the general store. She also mentioned Jamie Miller who married a girl named Lily; and Emory Miller, the youngest of the Miller family.

Libby's grandmother name in English was She-Who-Hurries-Through-Dark-Clouds-In-Search-of-Lost-Child and her mother's Indian name was Kee-Wee-Ma. Libby's father was from Canada, as were the Listers.

She mentioned that her favorite song when she was little was "When the Iron Horse Comes, I Won't Lose Track of You, My Little Golden Pony." Does anyone remember this song or any of the words or what the story or theme of the song was?

She told us the story (a "dime novel" of the day) of "Dusty Rose and the Heathen Waif." Does anyone have any recollection of that story? We have the complete first part. She tells us there were sequels.

No one in or out of this world could be more anxious to receive some trace of these people than Libeth Fideaux and we.—Marion Pahl and Marilyn Fillis, c/o Ryerson Library, Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois 60603

### Ruben Williams—Sam Goddard

I am looking for any descendants of Ruben Williams who lived in Kiowa, Oklahoma and died in 1890. His wife was Susan Lowery. Their daughter (my mother) is still living and would appreciate hearing from anyone with information. I am also looking for descendants of Sam Goddard who was born in 1830 in Marshall County, West Virginia. His wife was Eliza Fair. They went to Colorado or Nebraska in the early days.—Mrs. Tom Kinder, Box 709, Parker, Arizona 85344

### W. A. Brechbiel

I am trying to locate my brother-in-law, William Albert Brechbiel, who is forty years old and was last heard from five years ago while working for the National Geographical Survey in California. His parents, Mr. and Mrs. Clarence A. Brechbiel of 711 East Main, Weiser, Idaho, celebrated their fiftieth wedding anniversary November 3, 1968 and we are all anxious to hear from or of him. I will return all postage from those who write me.—Roy Trumble, 1813 Kerr Street, Boise, Idaho 83705

### Thorstensen-Christopherson

I would like information on descendants of Inger Thorstensen and Herman Christopherson, whose children were Hermana, Fred, Tom and possibly others. They may have settled in Montana. Petrea Thorstensen, Inger's sister, married Martinius Olsen and their children were Thorvald, Bjorne, Margeret, and Marie. They are believed to have settled in Minnesota. Theirs is a close-knit family holding a reunion every year with more than 150 cousins in attendance. We have researched our library and many cousins but cannot find any descendants of these people. We have correspondents in Norway who contribute regularly to the family newsletter. Any information would be greatly appreciated on any descendants of the above.—Frank Anderson, Fire Department Headquarters, Superior, Wisconsin 54880

### Daniel & Amanda Allison

Would anyone have information about the family of my grandparents, Daniel T. and Amanda Allison? I know nothing of Daniel and very little of Amanda. I do not know Amanda's maiden name but she was born in Indian Valley, California on April 15, 1862 and spent her younger years in California and Nevada. She married Daniel T. Allison in Nevada in 1876 and eleven children were born of this union, five of whom died before she did in 1940 or 1941. Daniel died in 1917.

The Allisons made their home in California and Nevada until 1886 when they moved to Grand Junction, Colorado where they remained until 1900. They then moved to Norrie, Colorado and six years later moved back to Grand Junction, establishing their permanent home. At the time of Amanda's death she was survived by two sons, Walter and Raymond T. (my father, now living in Denver, Colorado), Mrs. Fred Montey, of Grand Junction, Mrs. Mattie Doull of Great Falls, Montana; Mrs. Edith Kuhre and Mrs. Vista Ruth Train of Pocatello, Idaho.—Mrs. Sylvia Janein Allison Newman, 110 Fetters Ave., Sonoma, California 95476

### William Oakley

I would like to correspond with any person having information about my great-uncle, William Oakley, born in New York City on September 5, 1861. His parents were John Benjamin Oakley and Mary Kennedy. William was placed in a Catholic orphanage in New York City following the death of his parents in 1863 and is believed to have been adopted or raised by an unknown family in Texas.—Grover C. Oakley, Jr., CMR Box 2229, APO San Francisco, California 96328

### Funston—Taylor—Davis

I can find no record at all of my great-grandfather's (James C. Funston) two brothers. The 1850 census for Bath County, Kentucky gives his birthplace as Pennsylvania. James and his two brothers carved their names on a tree and then separated. He went to Kentucky where he married Nancy Warren in 1846. There are a lot of limbs of the Funston family but none of us have yet found the

*(Continued on page 68)*



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A Joe Small Publication

July-August, 1969
Volume 16, No. 6
Whole No. 94

# True West

**All True—All Fact—Stories of the Real West**

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*"The files of TRUE WEST and FRONTIER TIMES are going to be of great historical value and should be preserved in all the libraries of the country."*—Walter Prescott Webb, former President, American Historical Association.

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**Cover: Josef Muench**
*Navajos in Monument Valley*

TRUE WEST is published bi-monthly by WESTERN PUBLICATIONS, INC., P.O. Box 3668, 1012 Edgecliff Terrace, Austin, Texas 78704. 35c per copy, $4.00 for 12 issues in the United States and Possessions, Canada and Mexico. $5.00 for 12 issues in all other countries. Second-class postage paid at Austin, Texas. Copyright 1969 by WESTERN PUBLICATIONS, INC.

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Many manufacturers of Beat Frequency detectors have, in frustration, turned away from their BF detectors. They have begun to build TR units in an attempt to produce stable, sensitive detectors. In truth, GOOD QUALITY TR detectors are fairly stable and sensitive but they are lacking in the better, more desirable features that the treasure hunter requires. Beat Frequency detectors are more versatile in that any type of coils can be manufactured for use with them. Also, the BF detectors produce a much wider search pattern than does the TR. This means that a BF can scan an area much more quickly than can the TR. Also, unlike the TR, the BF detectors feature an ADJUSTABLE FREQUENCY output to suit operator requirements.

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# Truly Western

### Prairie Fire

Dear Joe:

Here is a story told to me by an uncle by marriage, John Howe who lived to be ninety-one, and one of my father's sisters, who also lived to see ninety years.

In the 1880s a prairie fire south of Fonda, Iowa threatened many farms as it swept to the edge of Fonda and on to Grant City. The thinly populated area was like a land under seige. In the early false dawn a torch-like flickering in the northeast signaled a danger equal to an army on the move.

Tom Murphy, my grandfather, was farming about four miles south of Fonda. He awoke to see flames coming toward his farm long before he had a fire-break plowed around his home. This ring of safety was sure to hold the fiery enemy. He called the older boys to get the two cows and the four horses; the rest all ran to the well and drew water in all containers available. As the fire came closer the entire family took up battle stations with shovels, wet blankets, and hoes. One boy tried to plow a wider fire-break.

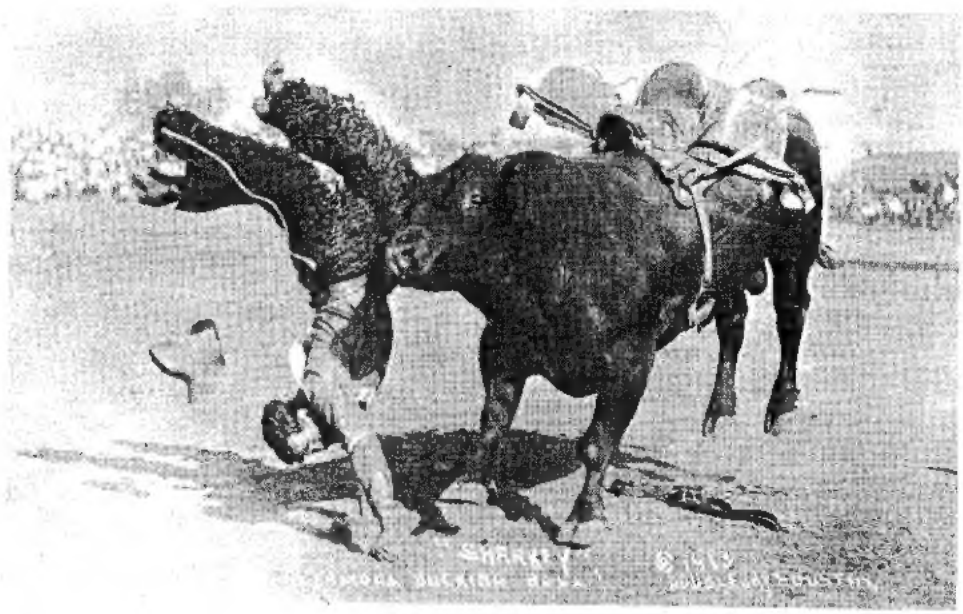
In minutes the fire was on them, leaping and chewing the edge of the farm home, a roaring like a steam engine with cyclone-like wind sweeping the area. But the family stood fast on the battle line as did many others in the fire. Little fires sprang up all over the yard but were put out with pans of water, wet blankets, shovels, and hoes. The barn was always in danger, the house seemed immune, the small out-buildings flamed and were put out. Horses ran for the barn and cows were lowing in fear. Nobody even noticed the chickens as a grain bin smoked and flamed. All water available was put on it and the smoldering fire went out. The people were blackened by smoke and tired. Already the fire had passed, sweeping on to the southwest.

All considered themselves lucky as no major damage was done. The crops were saved, although a little smoky. The cattle and horses did not eat too well. Also hay had to be bought for the winter as the fire had taken all the prairie grass. Nobody died but some livestock were lost.—Ed Murphy, P. O. Box 373, Fonda, Iowa 50540

### Snapped Chaps!

Dear Sir:

The Idaho Falls War Bonnet Round-up, located at the old Tautphous ranch, in 1913 had a bull that was famous in his own way. The cowboy reaching for the ground had previously made the statement, "No bull can jump high enough in the sky to dump me. I can ride anything that has hair, hide and hoofs." The bull has made a twopoint landing, as his rear hoofs are off the ground. The stirrups are flapping and the cowboy's hands are touching the ground, before his high peaked hat has hit the dust. His chaps are upside down and Sharkey, the bucking bull artist, has won another round—fifty-six years ago!—S. H. Berry, Box 1192, Boise, Idaho 83701



### The Way It Was

Dear Joe:

This story was told to me by an old-timer—Newt Henderson—from Kansas. We were sitting in the lobby of one of the great hotels here in Knoxville.

He told me he was born in Perryville, Kansas in 1885 when the town was very small and consisted of a bank, a hotel, a post office, and two general stores, one operated by Arthur Ledbetter and the other by Jake Moore. He said he used to steal candy from the Ledbetter store and this was why old man Ledbetter did not hire him in future years.

His pa ran a livery stable down the street from the main drag for the benefit of guests who came into town to stay at the hotel. People on their way west stopped only for the night, none ever wishing to settle there. Half the time his pa didn't know where Newt was and since he was so busy, he didn't care anyway.

It was so hot and dusty one could eat the dust, and the buildings were so covered with it they looked as if they had put on powder. But on a rainy day the streets became nothing but sticky mud. In order to get from one side to the other, women had to go piggy back on the men.

"I used to hang around at the hitching post," he said, "watching the settlers load up supplies for the next day's journey—especially on a rainy day because those poor horses would get stuck in the mud and pull until their bellies touched the ground. I felt sorry for them. Some made it out okay and others didn't."

He said his pa moved away to a town down in Texas. His pa told him Perryville was getting too civilized and things were not the same anymore.

Newt had very little education and hardly attended school the way kids should but I was very pleased to have met and talked with him.—James C. Glazner, 2404 McCroskey Avenue, Knoxville, Tennessee 37917

### Fred & Jose Carter

Dear Sir:

I wrote to Milt Hinkle to see if he remembered two rodeo riders back in the early 1900s. He said he did remember and that they were together in the 101 show. Fred and Jose Carter were from New Boston in Linn County, Missouri. They started riding just for fun more than anything else and would ride horses at the local sale barn. They said Jose would make a ride, then he would pass the hat around. My father saw Fred ride at Brookfield, Missouri City Park, south of the C.B.Q. Railroad tracks. Then in 1921 my father was working in Ault, Colorado and went up to Cheyenne, Wyoming to the roundup and saw Fred ride again.

They say Fred was a smooth rider and Jose was a rough one, but good. Fred was hurt while riding in Madison Square Garden. A horse pinned him against a wall. He came back to Missouri and lived for two years. He was paralyzed on one side and passed away in a veterans hospital. Jose was killed in a railroad mishap in

*(Continued on page 72)*



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# FABULOUS QUARTER HORSE:

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# Steel Dust

By WAYNE GARD
Illustrated by Nick Eggenhofer

## The true account of Texas' most celebrated stallion!

Author's note: Texas legends of Steel Dust and his prowess on the prairie tracks revive memories from away back. In the early years of this century, as a young boy in a crossroads village in southeastern Illinois within a hundred miles of Kentucky, I used to hear of horse races on country roads on Sunday afternoons. Some folks frowned on this use of the dirt roads, and more disapproved of what they regarded as breaking the Sabbath; but the young sports kept on matching their horses.

In 1908, as a boy of nine years, I was living in eastern Kansas in a county-seat town where, in the 1870s, ponies had been matched in the unpaved streets. By 1908, local horses were raced on an oval track during the fair. Yet the fact that my father talked of entering the horse that pulled our family surrey suggests that the races there still had an informal and amateur cast.

Later I watched horse races at county fairs and at the state fairs of Illinois and Iowa—most of them harness races. Not until I came to Texas in 1933 did I begin hearing of quarter horses by that name—and of Steel Dust. In 1935, while gathering material for my biography of Sam Bass, which was to come out the next year, I came upon some lore of frontier quarter horse races and of the celebrated Steel Dust. Before he became a brigand and a train robber, Bass was known for his fleet Denton mare, a quarter horse of Steel Dust strain, which he matched on many Texas straightaway tracks in the middle 1870s.

In Denton I talked with one of the jockeys who had ridden the Bass mare, and with Will Williams, who told much of this sprinter and of the earlier Steel Dust. Williams described the race between Steel Dust and Monmouth at McKinney, which his father had witnessed. He also showed a letter from a son of the owner of Shiloh, a famous stallion against which Steel Dust later was matched at Dallas. Then, in 1936, I visited the King Ranch, where Bob Kleberg showed superb mounts of Steel Dust ancestry.

Early files of the Dallas *Herald*, which I had searched, revealed no mention of Steel Dust except as a sire of later sprinters. The bits of information about him that I came across were fragmentary, vague, and usually undocumented. Steel Dust was a baffling subject. In 1941 a note from Frank Dobie suggested that I go down to Ten Mile Creek and see what I could learn. "You are the man to trace the true story of Steel Dust," he wrote.

I had thought of doing that but, busy with other work, had put it off. Finally, in May 1948, Charles C. Pierce, a Dallas investment broker and a great-grandson of one of the owners of Steel Dust, took me down to and below Lancaster, where we heard some of the Steel Dust legends from Pierce's relatives and others. Already I had talked with a son of the owner of Monmouth.

The outcome was a long article on Steel Dust for the annual horse issue of the *Cattleman* for that year. The next year Bob Denhardt, who had dug up some information on Steel Dust and much on quarter horses, prodded me into writing an article on Shiloh for the *Western Horseman* of which he then was editor. That called for more interviewing and letter writing, besides hunting through some early newspaper files. Then, in 1953, I went down to Ellis County to see the old home of Jack Batchler, the owner of Shiloh, and to look through his horse record book. This faded book has stud records for Shiloh during the 1860s and one of breeding a Batchler filly to Steel Dust. This is the only contemporary mention of Steel Dust that has been brought to light.

Before long the articles I had written on Steel Dust, Shiloh, the Denton mare, and the King Ranch quarter horses, which have both Steel Dust and Shiloh blood, began to make a sizeable pile.

The verifiable knowledge about Steel Dust, to which almost every breeder of quarter horses tries to trace the ancestry of his mounts, still is thin and full of gaps. Uncertainty as to many of the dates and other points makes any



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**account of this famous stallion belong almost as much to folklore as to history. Yet there is enough to show that Steel Dust was not a mere legend but a flesh-and-blood horse. More than that, there are glimpses that reveal the prowess of the stallion. Readers will agree that he deserves the honor he has attained as the foundation sire of the most popular of all strains of quarter horses.**

**Hardly anyone else except Bob Denhardt visibly has bothered to try to check any of the Steel Dust legends. Most of the information in this brief account I have gleaned from word-of-mouth sources. It has come from Texans who like horses and whose fathers, uncles, or grandfathers used to watch Steel Dust and his rivals race on the prairie turf. A few bits have come from the files of Texas and Kansas newspapers and from articles in livestock journals. With the permission of Houghton Mifflin Company I have taken the story of the Denton mare, slightly abridged and revised, from my *Sam Bass*.**

**In my article on Steel Dust in 1948, I presented conflicting evidence on several points without trying to decide which was correct. Since then, the uncovering of some new bits of information has helped to answer some of the questions. Here, to give a less impeded narrative and to avoid bothering the reader with doubts, I have included only the version that seemed most convincing, except on one point. On Steel Dust's last years, the conflicting stories seemed so evenly balanced that I have given them all. Perhaps, even yet, someone can establish definitely which one is correct.**

**This narrative, mainly a piecing together of my earlier articles, is issued as a means of answering some of the questions that many have asked about Steel Dust, his rivals, and his progeny. It cannot answer them all, but the current interest in quarter horses seems to justify republication of the material. With the superb drawings by Nick Eggenhofer, one of the great illustrators of writings on the frontier West, I hope that this memoir will interest not only horse breeders but the many others who find a thrill in the looks and performance of a mighty steed.**

TRAVELERS WHO passed those two covered wagons headed for Texas were sure to notice the frisky bay colt bouncing along beside them. They might have said he was feeling his oats. Of course, he wasn't having any oats. The small supply of grain in the wagons was for the horses that pulled them and who had little chance to graze during the day. Colts and cows could rustle for themselves.

The bay yearling, Steel Dust, was having the time of his young life. Fall rains, besides partly erasing old ruts and hoofprints, had freshened the vegetation. And the wagons, as they rumbled on to the southwest, were reaching country where frosts and freezes held off until later and the grass stayed green longer. Steel Dust could find some new kind of grass almost every day.

There were strange sights, too, along the trail in the fall of 1844—as strange to a yearling stallion as to the two young Illinois couples in the covered wagons. Besides other prairie schooners carrying settlers to some promised land, there occasionally was a wagontrain of traders or one hauling military supplies. And sometimes, headed north, would come a herd of half-wild cattle in charge of dusty men on horseback. The cattle had wide, sharp horns that gave them a ferocious look. Steel Dust was willing to let them have the whole width of the trail.

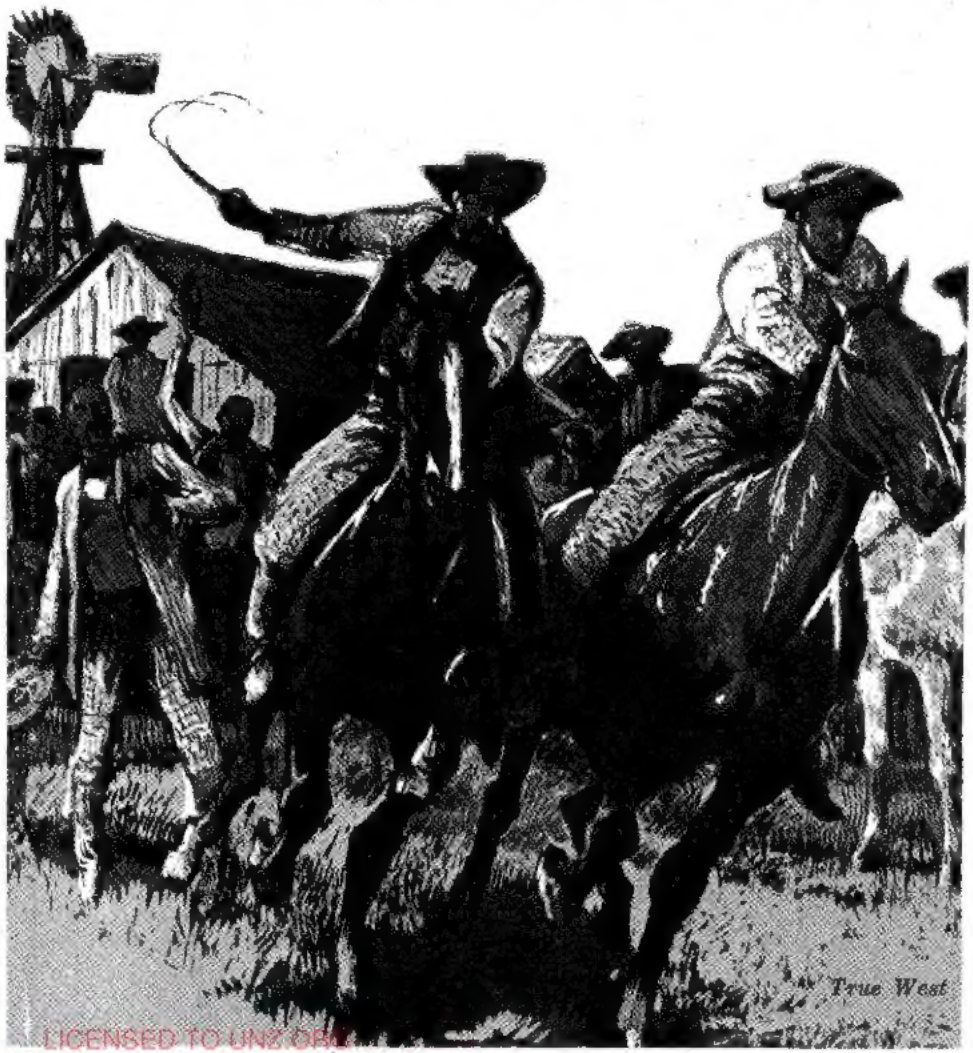
Steel Dust, although bred and foaled in Kentucky, would not have impressed anyone whose main equine interest was in Thoroughbreds. He didn't have the lanky build of the distance racer. His was the compact, solid form of the short horse. True, his sire, Harry Bluff, was by Short Whip and out of a Thoroughbred mare, Big Nance; but Steel Dust had the build and gait of a quarter horse or Virginia horse. He was so promising a specimen of that type that the two men in the wagon had paid Bill Greene a stiff price for him. And those two weren't in the habit of making bad guesses on horses.

The two wagons had come from farms near the village of Kane, in the southern edge of Greene County, Illinois, and—as the crow flies—less than fifty miles north of St. Louis. Driving the first wagon was husky Middleton Perry, better known as Mid. The son of a stonemason of Virginia birth, Mid had been born in Indiana and would be thirty in December. He felt like a veteran, as he was the older of the two men and had made a trip to northeastern Texas in 1837 to take a look at the land. He had been married for two and a half years to Ellen Malinda, a daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Thomas McKee Ellis. A Greene County farmer, Ellis was of Scotch ancestry and South Carolina birth. His wife had been Mary Witt.

In the second wagon were Jones Greene and his sunbonneted bride. Greene was twenty-seven and was of Illinois birth. His father, a farmer and stockman, had been born in Kentucky and had served in the War of 1812 and in the Illinois Legislature. Only a few months earlier, on July 11, 1844, Jones Greene had married Mary Ann Ellis, a younger sister of Mrs. Perry. Following their wedding, they had had ample time to gather their presents and other belongings and to make preparations before departing for Texas on September 26. The bride, Mary Ann, was eighteen.

Stories of panthers, bears, buffalo herds, and Indian scalpers had not deterred the two couples from heading for the Republic of Texas. They had received favorable reports of the country from a brother of Mrs. Ellis, who had settled on Pine Creek, north of the Texas town of Paris. That was in Lamar County, just below the Red River which divided the Lone Star Republic from the Indian Territory of the United States.

Both Perry and Greene were seasoned farmers and stockmen. Greene was especially interested in breeding and raising horses. Mid Perry knew horses, too, and kept an eye out for their racing





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possibilities. The pair knew they could buy land cheaply in Texas. The republic was handing out big grants to its soldiers. These men, in turn, were selling much good land at twenty-five to fifty cents an acre.

ON THE TRIP to Texas, the Perrys and Greenes escaped most of the hardships and dangers which beset many emigrants of their day. They had to ford rivers and creeks and to supplement their food with wild game, but the Indians they encountered were not hostile. They enjoyed the colorful fall scenery of the Ozarks, and their eyes caught many kinds of unfamiliar vegetation.

Toward the southwest they saw the thorny Osage orange or *bois d'arc*, with its ripening greenish-yellow balls. This shrub was beginning to be planted as a hedge on Illinois farms; now they saw it in its wild state. As they approached Texas, they saw also the feathery fronds and browning seed pods of the mesquite.

The journey kept the two couples away from news of an exciting presidential campaign. A dark horse, James K. Polk, had won the nomination of the Democratic party. His opponent, the Whig candidate, was the celebrated senator, Henry Clay. The travelers had a strong interest in one issue of the campaign. They supported Polk's stand for westward expansion and for the annexation of Texas. Clay had opposed annexation but had just made a hedging statement that he would welcome it if achieved without a war with Mexico.

After a trip of five weeks, the two covered wagons and the scampering Steel Dust reached Texas. The men pointed their teams to the farm home of their wives' uncle in Lamar County. There they rested, visited, and heard the news of Polk's election. Soon afterward the two men, leaving their wives at the Witt home for the winter, rode on into the interior of Texas to look for suitable land.

Perry and Greene rode southwest, through the oak cross timbers and over the open prairies. Some of the grass they saw was so high that one could tie its heads over a horse's back. The pair went down past Dallas, a little cluster of log cabins on the east bank of the Trinity River. There those who wanted to cross the stream without getting wet could use a crude ferry made by fastening split logs across two canoes hollowed from the trunks of cottonwoods. The ferry was pulled across with a rope made of twisted buffalo hair.

Thirteen miles below Dallas, on the Austin road, the two men came upon two rows of hastily built log cabins with chimneys of sticks and mud. This was the temporary settlement of Hard Scrabble, which a group of Illinois emigrants, led by Roderick Rawlins, had established in the fall. The newcomer families were spending the winter together there, ready to scatter to their separate farms in the spring.

Most of the land thereabout never had felt a plow or a fence post, but new settlers were arriving. This frontier country still was in danger of Indian raids. Only a few miles away, in 1840, bronze warriors had ambushed and killed five soldiers of a road-surveying party when, carelessly leaving their muskets, they went out from their camp to get water.

Soon Perry and Greene found black land that suited them. Some of it had trees, which made it look more like the farms they had left. From Judge E. L. R. Patton each bought 320 acres on Ten Mile Creek. Each also took a headright to another 320-acre tract. Their land was two to three miles east and a little south of Hard Scrabble, near the site of which the permanent village of Lancaster soon began to rise. It was in a part of Robertson County about to be sliced off to form Dallas County.

Back at the Witt farm on Pine Creek, Perry and Greene prepared to move in the early spring of 1845, about the time that Polk was being inaugurated as President of the United States. They greased the axles of their wagons, oiled their harness, loaded their household goods and farm implements, and hitched their horses. With Steel Dust scampering along again, they and their wives set out for their new homes.

As the Perry and Greene wagons rumbled southwest over the Texas prairies, people still were debating the issue of joining the United States. To show their leanings toward the merger, these emigrants from Illinois used berry juice to paint in big letters on one of their wagons, "Polk." The name of the new President in Washington, who was an advocate of taking in Texas, brought cheers from some folks in the frontier villages the wagons passed through. But from others it brought scowls and adverse comments.

Once settled on Ten Mile Creek, the Perrys and Greenes liked the neighborhood so well that soon the women were able to persuade their parents to follow them. So Thomas McKee Ellis and his wife and their remaining children set out from Illinois in the fall of 1845, about a year after the departure of their married daughters and their sons-in-law. They, too, stopped with Mrs. Ellis' brother in Lamar County, but not for long. In January 1846, just as Texas was joining the United States, their wagon rolled in at Ten Mile Creek. There Ellis built a cabin and soon acquired a farm of 640 acres.

The mild southern climate and the lush Texas grass agreed with young Steel Dust. He developed quickly into an outstanding stallion. Larger than the average quarter horse, he was between fifteen and sixteen hands high and weighed 1,100 to 1,200 pounds. Some horses in the neighborhood were more handsome, but Steel Dust was exceptionally well muscled. Soon he showed that he was an amazingly fast sprinter. The younger Ellis boys, brothers-in-law of the owners, rode Steel Dust whenever they could.

Perry and Greene knew they had made a good buy in Steel Dust, but in their first years in Texas they had too much work to do to pay much attention to him. They were building cabins, putting land into cultivation, and acquiring herds of cattle and sheep. One day one of the neighbors shot a bear which had been stealing their pigs. They used the bear fat in making soap. On another day a Negro woman came running back from a spring where she had seen a panther waiting for prey. Again, several Indians appeared in a pioneer's cabin. The women, fearful for the baby that the warriors eyed, hastily cooked an appetizing meal for the visitors. After they had eaten, the red men left peaceably.

Even with big families, there was plenty of work for everyone. Sometimes the Ellis girls had to go out into the wheat fields and beat on tin pans to keep birds from eating the grain. The women, in addition to their cooking and cleaning and other chores, made nearly all the clothes for the whole family, including embroidered shirts for the men. When Perry and Greene went to New Orleans, trailing to market a herd of surplus stock, Greene wore a dark, speckled suit made from wool grown on his own farm. His wife had cleaned and carded the wool, spun it, woven the cloth, dyed it with the juice of pokeberries and *bois d'arc* balls, and converted it into a durable suit.

Yet there was time for recreation. The frontier families gathered occasionally for fried-chicken picnics and barbecues. There were short trips for fishing or shooting. In the fall there was pecan hunting. And at almost any time of year someone might get up a scrub horse race.

The Ellis, Perry, and Greene families were among those who always had fine horses. They liked to try them out against each other on the informal practice track across the road from the Ellis home. This track was on a flat bit of prairie near a small oak grove in which the pioneers held some of their picnics. Like others on the frontier, it was a quarter-mile straight turf track. Usually the men matched only two horses in each race. On this track near Ten Mile Creek, Steel Dust gave an early showing of his prowess.

SCRUB RACES like those in which Steel Dust took part suited the Texas farmers and stockmen along Ten Mile Creek. Quarter racing had been a favorite recreation on the American frontier for two centuries. Believed to have been started in England, it had thrived in tidewater Virginia. In some of the colonies to the north, sportsmen interested in longer races had looked down on the quarter horse, in those days more often called the short horse or the Virginia horse. Yet Virginia planters had taken the short races seriously, sometimes betting large sums or even whole tobacco crops on the outcome.

In colonial days, race week would bring a throng to the James River in the spring and again in the fall. Sometimes the winner on a straight track, there called a quarter path, would take as much as $40,000. William Randolph, grandfather of the statesman John Randolph of Roanoke, was a promoter of quarter races at Malvern Hills in 1689. The grandfather of Thomas Jefferson figured in a race there in 1697. In early Virginia, quarter racing was a gentleman's sport.



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J. D. F. Smith, who toured the colonies prior to the Revolution, reported that in southern Virginia and in North Carolina people were much attached to quarter racing. Each race was a match between two horses on a straight track. "They have a breed that performs it with astonishing velocity, beating every other for that distance with great ease," he wrote. "I am confident there is not a horse in England, nor perhaps in the whole world, that can excel them in speed. These likewise make excellent saddle horses for the road."

The most famous of the Virginia quarter horses was Janus. Foaled in England in 1746, he was brought to the colony by Mordecai Booth in 1752. Janus, widely admired for his appearance and his speed, sired colts that won on many of the quarter paths. Among them was Twigg, a bright bay that sometimes won 80,000 to 100,000 pounds of tobacco in a single match. Another was Babran, a noted sprinter that fell and broke his neck while leading Jupiter on the Lewis path in a match for 500 pounds, Virginia currency. Still another was Peacock, a pale sorrel whose dam was imported from Spain. On North Carolina tracks he won more than $40,000.

As pioneer settlers pushed westward along the Wilderness Trail and other routes, quarter racing became the chief equine amusement of the new frontier settlements. It was the only kind of race that didn't require an expensive and carefully prepared track. One needed only to measure off runways on a level strip of prairie. Many young bloods held impromptu races in the village streets. In Kentucky these matches became so common that, by 1800, some towns were imposing a fine of five dollars for racing in a public thoroughfare. In 1798 the trustees of Lexington ordered the collection of fines for street racing. In 1821 Kentucky's lawmakers legislated against the highway matches. But, as a ten-dollar fine wasn't heavy rent for a track, some of the street racing continued.

Soon the Texas frontier had sprinters that were leaving imprints in equine history. General Sam Houston, whose tattered band won Texas' independence in the battle of San Jacinto, shipped from Pennsylvania by water a fine chestnut stallion. This was Copper Bottom, foaled in 1828. Houston's mount, which lived until 1860, won many races on informal tracks and became the foundation sire of a strain of quarter horses that became popular in some sections.

ON THE Texas prairies, quarter races were becoming common when Steel Dust arrived. He took readily to the tracks, and soon his speed earned him many partisans. The bay stallion's sight was poor. Perhaps that was what made him nervous and hard to handle. At the start of a match, he would lunge and jump. Only an expert jockey could stick to him. Yet he had startling speed in a short race. To those who saw him, he seemed to flash like lightning. People in other neighborhoods soon heard of Steel Dust. They began coming to see him run and to match their sprinters against him.

At some of the Texas scrub races so many overnight visitors came that some of them had to camp out. Most of the spectators, though, were from shorter distances. They usually came on horseback and remained in their saddles to watch the matches, their faces shaded by the broad brims of their hats. Often the mounts of the onlookers formed solid lines on both sides of the grassy or harrowed course.

Horse races on the Texas prairies had few standing rules. For each match the owners of the contending ponies made a separate agreement. Although sometimes more horses competed, the typical race was a match between two horses. Often these contenders represented rival ranches or towns. Before the start, the judges would line the ponies with a tree or a post or some other fixed object. Even the end of a wagon might do. Judges had to be chosen carefully, since charges of foul play sometimes led to fights. One Indian judge, determined not to be tricked stretched across the finish line a rope smeared with red paint. The winning horse, he ruled, would have to show a paint mark to claim the prize.

Various methods were used to start the match. A pistol shot was one. Another was called the lap and tap. Under this rule, the horses were led about fifty feet back of the starting line, where they whirled and began running. If he found them sufficiently close "in lap" as they crossed the starting line, the judge "tapped them off" by shouting, "Go!" If they were too far apart, they had to go back and make a new start.

A third method, common in Texas and the Indian Territory, was by "ask and answer." The starter would ask, "Are you ready?" When he heard the jockeys answer, "Yes," he would shout, "Go!" and the match would be on. For important races in the larger towns, the start often was made from chutes built of narrow poles cut in the woods. These stalls were devised in an effort to let the rivals have an even getaway.

As the ponies started down the course, spectators threw their hats into the air and set up shouts that blotted the sound of flying hoofs. Confusion and contention



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sometimes arose before the outcome could be determined. Disputes over alleged breaking of the rules might lead to blows or even pistol shots. But in most cases, bets were paid promptly. When the losers were Indians, there often was danger that they might run off with the stakes or might come back after dark to steal back what they had lost.

From Ten Mile Creek, which saw many such races, the renown of Steel Dust spread to adjoining counties. In Collin County, bordering Dallas County on the north, was another celebrated horse. This was Monmouth, a Kentucky short horse that had proved to be an unusual sprinter. The proud owner of Monmouth was Harrison Stiff.

Stiff had grown up at Breckenridge, Kentucky. After a brother and a nephew had migrated to Texas and had sent back favorable reports, he decided to join them. He took with him his horse, which had won many races in Kentucky. Stiff traveled by riverboat to Alexandria, Louisiana. There, in stepping off the boat, Monmouth was temporarily crippled. He limped some but was able to walk to McKinney, the seat of Collin County. Stiff and his horse arrived there on Christmas Day, 1850.

Within two years, in September 1852, Stiff was married to Mary Ann Nelson. By that time, Monmouth was able to race again and was acquiring a local reputation similar to that which Steel Dust had gained about fifty miles to the south. Some said Monmouth could go faster than a rush telegram on a downhill wire. Stiff's bride disapproved of racing, but she was mollified to some degree when her husband brought home a whole fistful of gold pieces he had won on a race between Monmouth and a strongly backed rival.

A clash between Steel Dust and Monmouth on the prairie turf was almost inevitable. Finally a match was arranged to be held at McKinney in 1855, and the owners of both horses began intensive training. Young Henry Ellis, who was thirteen, was promised that he might ride Steel Dust. Henry had acquired most of his later height of six feet one, but he was so skinny that he had to weight himself down with a money belt filled with shot to meet the jockey weight requirement of the match.

Henry practiced with Steel Dust every day on the track across the road from his home. But when his Baptist mother learned that the McKinney race was to be held on a Sunday, she promptly banned him from riding. Henry was the most disappointed boy in the county, but he was unable to change his mother's mind. Chosen as Steel Dust's jockey for this and later races was a young Negro, Tom McKnight. To be sure that he would stick to the spirited stallion, Tom smeared Steel Dust's back and side with blackstrap molasses.

EVEN in that era of the log house and the oxcart, news of the impending race spread quickly by word of mouth. With Steel Dust and his owners on the road up to McKinney were enough neighbors and supporters to make a long procession. One of those who went along was a new arrival on Ten Mile Creek, John Batchler, better known as Jack. Batchler, a farmer and a blacksmith of Tennessee birth, had an interest in horses and racing that equaled that of Perry and Greene.

The dearth of other amusements helped to make this McKinney race a big event on the Texas frontier. To allow people to make the trip, court was closed in Sherman and even in distant Jefferson. Sportsmen and political bigwigs came from many towns outside the county. Among the local ones on hand was J. W. Throckmorton, a rising politician who was on his way to the governorship. The ladies, who disdained the scrub races on the open prairie, came with their menfolks in large numbers, some bringing their Negro maids. The crowd of visitors became so large that the Foote House, headquarters for almost every political and social gathering in McKinney, was turned over to the women exclusively. The men were told to look for sleeping space in homes or in stores. Ethelred Whiteley's saloon kept several bartenders busy before the race. On the front porch of a cabin home a whiskey barrel was opened and gourd dippers hung around it. Drinks went fast at a quarter a cup.

C. A. (Alex) Williams, deputy county clerk of Collin County, was among those who saw Steel Dust led into town. The visiting stallion was closely guarded by half-a-dozen men, who wouldn't let anyone else come near him. Collin County horsemen weren't much impressed with the appearance of Steel Dust. The twelve-year-old bay seemed quiet, gentle, and lacking in energy. Probably he was weary from the long trip. A wit in the crowd asked the Dallas County men if they thought they could wake up their horse.

Collin County people, ready to back their own Monmouth in any event, were all the more eager to bet after they had seen Steel Dust. The visitors from the south readily took up all the wagers offered. When the McKinney men ran out of cash, they began offering ponies, saddles, and bridles. They hadn't the least doubt that Monmouth would win.

The McKinney race, for its day, was a show of luxury and pomp. Its preliminaries only whetted the interest of the spectators in the inter-county match. As the two horses leaped from the pole starting stalls, there was no longer any question of Steel Dust's waking up. Monmouth was fast, but Steel Dust outsped him to make an undisputed win. The visitors, as they turned triumphantly toward home, seemed to have taken about all the loose cash out of McKinney. Until they could sell their next crops, a lot of Collin County folks would have to use something else for money.

Steel Dust was the toast of Dallas County. Back on the farm below Lancaster, he basked in fame. But for a while no one was willing to pit another horse against him. So he soon was used again as a saddle horse and, when needed, as a work horse on the farm. Once, after some persuasion, Jack Batchler borrowed him and matched him on a track two miles west of Lancaster, against Brown Dick. This was a small brown stallion that Alfred Bailes had brought from Hopkins County. Brown Dick never had lost a race, but Steel Dust bested him.

The victory of Steel Dust at McKinney

made him in strong demand as a sire. Horsemen from a wide area brought their mares to be bred to him. But, in spite of his twelve years, racing fans were determined not to let Steel Dust be retired from the quarter tracks. They wanted to see him run again. They began looking around for a sprinter worthy of being matched against him.

THOSE who wanted to see Steel Dust race again turned to Jack Batchler, whose handsome stallion, Shiloh, had begun winning on neighborhood tracks. Shiloh was a short horse, about eleven years old, having been foaled in west-central Tennessee about 1844. He was a finer looking horse than Steel Dust, with less of the chunky appearance of the quarter horse.

Batchler, born in 1817, had grown up in the neighborhood of Mount Pleasant and Columbia, in Maury County, Tennessee, two counties south of Nashville. A big husky fellow, he was apprenticed to a blacksmith when he was sixteen.

Shoeing horses exposed Batchler to a great deal of race talk, and before long he became an expert judge of horseflesh. He showed this judgment when he became the owner of Shiloh. This colt, described as dark bay or dark brown, with black mane and tail, soon began living up to his promise. Horsemen who had traveled over the whole country called Shiloh the most handsome horse they had ever seen. On short tracks he was one of the fleetest.

Shiloh had a pedigree that, on his sire's side, went a long way back. He was sired by Von Tromp by Thomas' Big Solomon by Sir Solomon by the celebrated and prolific Sir Archy. Shiloh's sire, Von Tromp, was out of Barbette by Sandbeck and was a half-brother to Flying Dutchman. Sir Archy, bred in 1804, was by Diomed and out of the imported Castianira by Rockingham and out of Tabitha. Diomed—1777-1813—was imported to Virginia in 1798. His sire was Florizel by King Herod by Tartar. Florizel's dam was by Cygnet and out of Cartouch. The dam of Cartouch was Ebony, a daughter of Flying Childers and Old Ebony.

Soon after the annexation of Texas, Jack Batchler, along with many other Tennesseans, decided to move to this new state that offered a vast expanse of cheap land. He left in 1849, parting with many of his possessions but taking along his precious Shiloh. Traveling by covered wagon, Batchler and his wife and two young children settled first on iron-red land in eastern Texas, near Henderson, in Rusk County. After living there as a farmer and blacksmith for several years, Batchler took a horseback trip to see the more productive black lands farther west. He liked what he saw and decided to make another move.

Early in 1855 the Batchler family packed their belongings and set out again toward the western frontier. Crossing the Trinity River at Porter's Bluff, they traveled up the valley to the southern edge of Dallas County. There Batchler rented a farm from Mrs. Lavender, a widow.

In Mid Perry and Jones Greene, Batchler found men of like interests. He spent much time in talking with them about horses, and soon he became a close friend. When pressed to match his Shiloh against their more famous Steel Dust, Batchler didn't hold back. Although he had seen Steel Dust beat Monmouth and Brown Dick, he had confidence in the speed of his own stallion and was willing to bet that Shiloh would win.

The owners arranged to hold this match on a quarter track at the eastern edge of Dallas. This was in 1855, only a few months after the McKinney race. Since Perry and Greene first had set eyes on it, Dallas had become the county seat and had grown into a town of several thousand inhabitants. It had acquired a gristmill, two cotton gins, and a small weekly newspaper. Yet it still showed most of the earmarks of a frontier town. Its dirt streets, dusty and muddy in turn, were pitted with hog wallows. Venison and wild duck were almost daily fare at the Crutchfield House.

The promised match between Steel Dust and Shiloh drew spectators from all parts of the county. Even the Dallas saloons were closed to let all the men attend. Like the track at McKinney, the Dallas one had chutes of narrow poles to assure an even start for the rival horses. Jack Batchler's son Henry, who was a boy of seven at the time, later described what happened:

"Steel Dust was so eager for the show that he reared and plunged all the time he was in the chute. When he made his leap to clear the stall, he struck the wall and ran a splinter into his shoulder, which disabled him. Father galloped Shiloh over the track and claimed the forfeit, to which the judges decided he was entitled. As a result of the injury to his shoulder, Steel Dust went blind and never raced again."

This outcome disappointed not only the owners and backers of Steel Dust but all the spectators. They were left without an answer to the question of which was the fleeter horse. They would debate that question on the shady side of country stores for many summers. Those who knew the owners and handlers of the two horses spurned the rumors that someone had poisoned Steel Dust or had bribed his trainer to cause the stallion to rear in the chute and fall to his knees.

Probably it would be more nearly accurate to say that the failing sight of Steel Dust caused his accident than to say that the injury to his shoulder led to his blindness. The loss of his sight was a gradual process that already was underway.

Shiloh, whose eleven years made him almost as old as Steel Dust, continued to race. Sometimes the jockey was one of the Batchler boys, at other times a young Negro. Stakes for most of the matches were not sums of money but ponies or mules. A race might even be run for a load of corn to be delivered at harvest.

NEITHER the blindness of Steel Dust nor his retirement from the tracks seemed to diminish his popularity as a sire. He had the qualities that farmers, cowmen, and racing men wanted in a quarter horse; and he had unusual ability to transmit them to his colts.

Before long, Steel Dust became even more renowned as a sire than he had been as a sprinter. As his fame spread across the prairies, horse fanciers from many communities brought their mares to Ten Mile Creek. They were not disappointed. In the range country to the west, Steel Dust colts were in strong demand as cow ponies. Meanwhile, others were winning matches on many tracks. Their laurels made Steel Dust in all the greater demand among breeders.

Shiloh, too, was popular as a stallion and sired many fast colts. In 1857 his owner, Jack Batchler, moved with his family a few miles south and bought a farm on Bear Creek. This was in Ellis County that, a dozen years earlier, had known roving bands of mustangs and vast herds of buffaloes.

Two years later Batchler moved to another Bear Creek farm, at Bluff Springs. This farm had a double log cabin, with puncheon floor, which J. W. Thomas had built in 1833, when Texas was a part of Mexico. Its other buildings included a stable and a small log granary. Batchler boarded over the cabin and added rooms for his growing family. He also built a blacksmith shop back of the house, near the creek. A big walnut tree in front of the house had a convenient limb from which the Batchler boys hung their deer to skin them.

The Civil War did not lessen the popularity of Steel Dust and Shiloh as sires, but it brought changes for their owners. In March 1862, Mid Perry formed a company of Confederate cavalry and rode off to war. After serving as captain for two years, much of the time in Arkansas, he returned home in 1864. Poor health and eye trouble kept Jones Greene from enlisting; he died November 12, 1864. From his stock farm on Bear Creek, Jack Batchler provided mules for some of the Confederate forces.

The booming of cannons was a long way from Ten Mile Creek and Bear Creek. The war, which spared most of Texas from its devastation, left warm the trails of mares to Steel Dust and Shiloh. No stud records for Steel Dust have survived, but evidence which has come down through the years by word of mouth indicates that, season after season, he continued to be one of the most popular sires in the region. Some breeders brought mares from as far as San Antonio. It is apparent that many of the claims of Steel Dust blood for later quarter horses could be true, even though most of them cannot be proved.

For Shiloh, some of the stud records have been preserved. In a lined book, part of which he had used for his blacksmith accounts in Rusk County in 1854, Jack Batchler made notations of many breedings of Shiloh and his several other stallions. Some leaves of the book are missing. The surviving ones list breedings to Shiloh from 1860 through 1865. They show that each spring during this period horse breeders brought at least twenty to forty mares to the Batchler farm to be bred to Shiloh.

Unfortunately, this incomplete stud-



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book is of little value in tracing the ancestry of the probably several hundred colts that Shiloh sired. It rarely gives the name of the mare and seldom states the name of the owner, although Mid Perry's name appears once in 1860 and twice in 1861. In no instance does it give the name of the colt. Usually the entry after the date, in Batchler's quaint spelling, is merely "Bred sorel mair to Shilo," "Bred old Jenni to Shilow," "Mrs. Howell bred Snip to Shilow," and "Bred dun mair to Shile." Sometimes there is reference to the type of mare, as well as to the color. There are several mentions of Spanish mares and others of mustang mares.

Presumably some of the mares bred to Shiloh were owned by Batchler, who made part of his living by raising horses and mules. In April 1864, he noted in his book that he had "bred big fily to Stele Dust." This is the only contemporary mention of Steel Dust that thus far has come to light. It gives convincing evidence that Steel Dust was still alive and standing at stud that spring. Presumably he was on Mid Perry's farm or that of Jones Greene, not many miles north of Bear Creek.

AFTER the war, the owners of both stallions continued to prosper. Mid Perry became a country squire with broad lands and seven children. He had plenty of time to attend the Masonic meetings at Lancaster. Jack Batchler likewise became a leader in his community. He donated a site for a cemetery and another for camp meetings. When his health required him to give up his work as a

*(Continued on page 44)*

# GUNSIGHT— ON TARGET!

BURIED TREASURE? Forget it! There's more bull than bullion in those sagas of mission silver and massacre gold. Lost mine maps? You might as well do your own and eliminate the middle man. Those stories of cached coin from Wells Fargo capers should start with "Once Upon A Time." And you'd do well to sprinkle salt on that Old-Timer's tale of a prospect hole with a million—a million, at least—in another foot or so.

Now I'm not saying there isn't a lost treasure somewhere in them thar hills. And if you'll hitch up your chair a little closer, friends, I'll tell you where you can find a two-in-one treasure trove that men have sought for over a hundred years. And no will o' the wisp is going to keep 'em chasing that long without something solid and substantial behind it. Like more silver than you can shake a stick at, right on top of the ground. And a cache of gold coins just a foot or so below. Sure you've heard of the Lost Gunsight. The legendary lode found by the Death Valley Party of 1849 during their exodus from Tomesha, the "land of ground afire."

But where in Death Valley? It's a big place, with countless exit route possibilities. And you can get led far astray by so-called experts on the '49er route. Instead, listen to what the '49ers themselves had to say.

*On Christmas morning, 1849, [we] were camped by a swift running salt stream. . . . Toward the west . . . there appeared within a distance of ten miles, upon the high peak of a mountain of volcanic formation, a gorge filled with snow and protected from the sun, which had lain there for a long time . . . .*

The quote is from John Colton, indefatigable chronicler of the Jayhawker contingent of the '49ers. And he is recalling the camp where they burned their wagons at McLean Spring along Salt Creek, which flows through Death Valley.

**Route of the Death Valley Jayhawkers from McLean Spring to "Silver Mountain" where they buried their gold.**

Before we go on, get a good map of Death Valley in front of you. Mark McLean Spring, near the junction of the Furnace Creek and Beatty-Stovepipe Wells roads. Then plot Colton's clues—*Within ten miles . . . high peak . . . snow . . . which had lain there for a long time.*

That they could see the snow, within

**Below, left: View overlooking Burro and Greer Springs at the head of Jayhawker Canyon in the Panamints. Below, right: McLean Spring, where the '49ers burned their wagons, westward to Tucki Mountain.**

# Please, fellows, when you read the first paragraph of this story, remember it's the author's opinion, not our'n!

By GEORGE H. KOENIG

Photos Courtesy Author

Wheel tracks skirting the miry salt flats in Death Valley's mid-section.

ten miles, precludes viewing it up in Emigrant Wash, around the projection of Tucki Mountain in the Panamints. Nor was it newly fallen snow. It was creviced snow, which few of the Panamint peaks can shelter. And one within ten miles eliminates most of those. So put an "x" by Tucki—but lightly.

First to leave the "burned wagons camp" was a group known as the Georgians. Colton's contingent followed them "on the trail for the snowbank." But it is a steep climb up the rugged, rocky slopes of Tucki, and Colton reports:

> *. . . in our weak condition [we] did not reach the snow until the second morning about 3 o'clock . . . the Georgian boys [had] built signal fires to guide us to camp. . . . The Georgia men were old silver miners. They told us upon our arrival in camp that there was an immense wealth of silver in sight where we camped. One of the boys showed me a chunk of black rock he held in his hands and told me it was half silver . . . that there was all the wealth in sight we could ask. Before leaving this camp one of the Georgians cached five thousand dollars in gold.*

WHILE the amount varies, the accounts of the incident are similar. George Miller, for example, who sought the Gunsight silver in 1869 from information supplied by Jayhawker Bill Rood, wrote:

> *Rhodes [Rood] told me that two men named Martin and Townsend brought the ore in at the place now known as Summit Camp . . . the second camp after they left their wagons. Rhodes told me that before they separated at this place they divided up the money they had, each taking what he wanted and dumped the rest in a blanket, about $2000 or $2500, and buried it under a greasewood bush.*

Whatever the amount it would be worth many times the figure in numismatic value today. But don't spend it yet! The "summit" of the Panamints is deceptive. After you head up the alluvial fans and crest at what is actually the "first summit," you are on a high mesa which stretches westward to a second summit. Between the two are a couple more clues to guide you.

One of the sons of the Brier family, traveling with the Jayhawkers, recalls: "Went into camp where they had water from a spring and the oxen saw the color and tasted the flavor of grass."

Also, keep in mind the '49ers' obsessive intentness on heading *west* whenever terrain permitted. And understandably so, for they had long been "guided only by the fact we knew the Pacific Ocean was to the west." Springs and grass. West. That's not all. In what is now known as Jayhawker Canyon there is a huge boulder with an inscribed "WBR 1849," ostensibly that of William B. Rood.

Shortly along the route that you are penciling in, you'll note the site of the old mining camp of Skidoo. Assuredly it is on the summit mesa, and it did have rich diggings. But remember the springs and the grass. Skidoo's barren, bleak sands were not noted for either, which is why they brought water in from Telescope Peak, twenty-three miles away.

So look a little farther. Westerly, of course. A group of six springs which can be spotted by their relative verdancy, including Greer and Burro Springs, are near Pinto Peak ridge which must be topped before descending into Panamint Valley. Here, too, you are at the head of the easy grade and within short scouting distance of the inscription rock in Jayhawker Canyon. And just above the silver-like antimony mines near the old mill site in Wildrose Canyon.

Was the Lost Gunsight silver actually antimony? The Georgians insisted it was silver. And the '49er who fitted a piece of it as a make-shift gunsight was told when he eventually reached Los Angeles that it was silver.

But there is no doubt about the gold. Too many spoke of it, and searched for it, to be coincidental.

IN 1903 a Gurley Jones wrote '49er Charles Mecum, from the Lake View House in Hawthorne, Nevada ("Best edibles the market affords for the hungry, wet goods in all varieties for the thirsty, clean and soft beds for the weary."):

> *. . . I have camped . . . where the parties . . . burnt their wagons. It has been reported . . . there was a valuable cash [sic] made when they deserted their wagons. I have done considerable excavating there and found under about 4 feet of sand the wagons or irons of them. . . . If there is anything in regards to a cache left there and you could let me know I will give you all the information I have of it. . . .*

What Mr. Jones lacked in generosity he made up in persistence. Later, as Superintendent of the Pactolus, Nevada Mining Company, he wrote Colton, adding, "There is an old, old Indian who tells me that the first white men who came in the country left the wagons there at this spot. . . ."

The interchange of letters resulted in a heated note and confirming clue from Mecum to Colton:

> *I have received a letter from a hyene [sic] in Nevada who claimed to have followed our trail and dug for the gold buried where we burnt our wagons. He is fooled. It was buried at Silver Mountain and not where we burnt our wagons. I did not answer his letter but sent it to you. All he wants of me is to find out where the gold was buried, which he will never do. All he finds out by me he can put in his eye.*

In another letter to the Jayhawkers, to be read at one of their reunions, Mecum leaves no doubt that the Silver Mountain was beyond where they left the wagons and where the party began to disintegrate in the Panamints before descending into Panamint Valley.

Now, treasure hunters, all you have to do is take that map you've plotted, according to the clues, and don your hiking boots. Just don't get confused over things you may have read about the Jayhawkers exiting via Townes Pass to the north of Pinto Peak. After all, Lt. Wheeler who traipsed the area in 1871-75 mapped Townes Pass as *south* of that peak.

Above all, don't forget a stout sack for the gold and Gunsight silver of the Death Valley '49ers which lies buried at an old campsite just beyond where the snow can lie sheltered from the sun, near a small grassy spring, two days' distance from McLean Spring and just

*(Continued on page 42)*



LICEN
ELECTRONIC RE PROHIBITED

**Reno explains there were more than one kind but they all had one thing in common. They were designed to provide a man with a fast ride—down!**

By RENO "DAD" INGLES
as told to RICHARD SUMMERS

# SKID ROADS

YOU MIGHT SAY there be several kinds of skid roads. The people I'd been working for, Mr. and Mrs. Kempton, was on their own special brand when everything caught up with them at once and Mr. Kempton charged with murder, and they started their long slide downhill, ending with Mr. Kempton's crazy hog ranch. Before that ever took place, which I only heard about later, I had started on my own skid road that was a mite different.

The longer a big timberman stayed on the job, the fatter the odds agin him he would be either maimed or kilt. In the old days they was just too many chances to be hurt on any branch of said employment. My first accident hadn't amounted to shucks—slip and tumble from that deadfall underneath a tree coming down, and it left me with only a few scratches. That kind of luck can't roll on forever. It's agin nature.

Then there's that other kind of skid road, the real one, the logger's skid road, a greased skid for transporting logs

**Left, a high climber tree-topping.**
Courtesy Oregon Historical Society

Courtesy D. L. Ingles

**Area along the Columbia River near Astoria. Ladies stand on the skid road—road made of spaced logs, greased with tallow and used by ox or horse teams for moving logs. The tallow, kept in barrels along the road, was often robbed by bears. At the top of the road sits a donkey engine.**

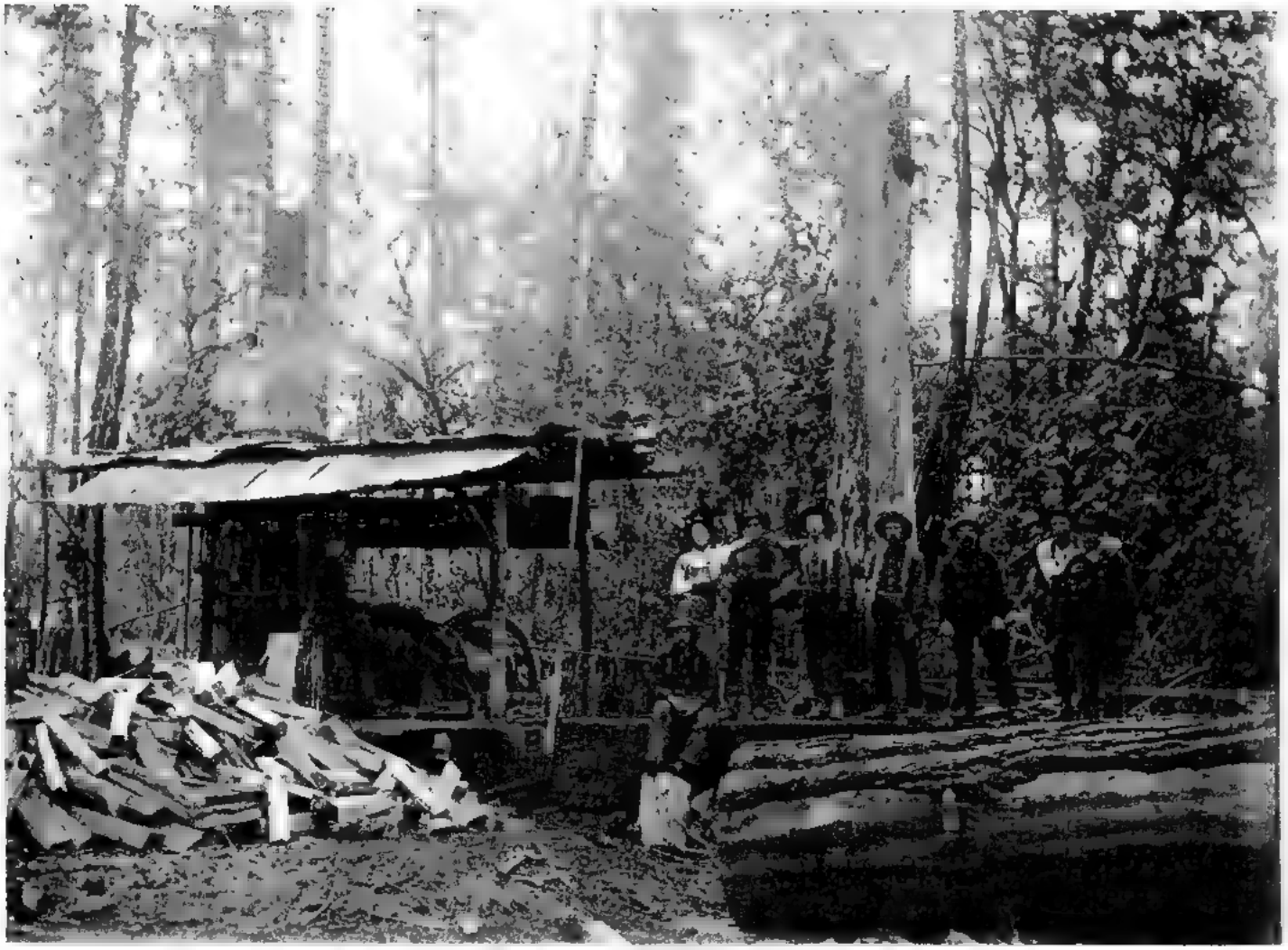
downhill, from which no doubt *skid road* and *skid row* both derive. It was a special track to yard logs out of the forest. One of my duties as a carpenter at the Kempton place, outside Astoria, Oregon, around 1900, was to keep the two skid roads in repair. First nine months or so I was a tree faller and handy-man around engines, and carpenter. Second year I run a yarding engine and supervised loading and unloading of them logs. Back in the timber we had several locations for cutting and two skid roads to yard the logs out and down to the river, where they was floated on down to the tie mill. These skid roads was as careful made as any railroad, so it was easy when Kempton shifted over, to convert them into railroad tracks.

Here is how they was made and operated. Ties was of log wood set close together, and the fill was banked on curves just like a railroad is. In the center of each tie-log was dovetailed right into the log a piece of hardwood—in this case, maple—and curved a bit. Had to use hard wood for this center where the logs would slide, because them logs would of worn soft wood to pieces in no time at all. Center pieces must be exact or a log would snub and tear out the whole tie, so they was laid very careful using a straight edge. All along the skid road at regular intervals was barrels of tallow, with right beside them a fireplace and iron kettles; also at regular intervals was shovels. Fires kept going all day under the tallow to keep it melted and ready for use.

Here come the outfit down the skid road, usually three yoke of bulls because they was big logs we took out of there. Bullwhacker with goad keeping them bulls moving, and along behind them a chain fastened to a big log which come sliding along the hardwood alley. Bull whacker yelling, bulls a-pulling. Right alongside or ahead of the outfit went the dogger and the greaser. The latter would dip his swab into the kettle of tallow and swab the hardwood alley along ahead of the outfit. If the log got to going too fast, the dogger would shovel dirt and sand into the alley to slow the log down.

Several places the skid road bridged deep canyons, one of them 300 foot deep. Oxen couldn't cross these bridges. You unhitched them from the log, drove them down a long winding path to the bottom and up the other side, then refastened the chain, and they started up and the log came across the bridge. These skid roads was pretty efficient and in general use until engines took their place early in the 1900s. At Kempton's we was using donkey engines to move the logs from where they was cut to the skid road. With these donkey engines we had what was called a ground lead, chain or cable through a big block fastened to a tree and through a block or pulley near the skid road, where they was one rollaway, with another rollaway at the other end of the skid road alongside the river.

It was only a little later on, a bit after my time, that the high lead was put into operation. This is where the high climber come in. He'd go along and pick out the tallest and strongest tree to be a spar tree. Up the high climber went, steel spurs fastened to the instep of his boots, wearing a safety belt, carrying saw and axe. He went up maybe from 150 to 200 feet, mighty dangerous work. Hanging there with spurs and loose



Courtesy D. L. Ingles

**Donkey engine in Washington.**

safety belt, he saws and chops off the top of that tree, maybe a hundred feet more on up, and when she goes down he braces and hangs on for dear life, because it is dear life. The top crashes down, the tree swaying back and forth afterward like it might go down too, but it don't. I've seen this operation many times, though not performed it.

SOMETIMES, I've heard, dynamite is used to save time and work. High-climber fastens a string of dynamite clear around the trunk, the cap cut into one of the stocks and a long fuse fastened to the cap to give him plenty of time to get down and get out of the way, because no telling where the top of that tree will land or where some of the branches will be blowed.

After the tree is topped and trimmed it is guyed up with two or three lines from the top to the ground or to other tree trunks on the ground. That spar tree is due for rough treatment. Now a great pulley or block is hauled up to the top of that tree with a cable; pulley weighs two to five tons, two-three feet across. It is fastened to the top of the tree with cable straps. A big cable, anywhere from an inch to two inches in diameter is run from the donkey engine drum, which winds and unwinds like a big metal spool of thread. The line or cable is now run from the spar tree down to the main yarding line that the butt chain is on, and this is hauled back into the timber, the chain fastened to the log that is to be yarded out. Pretty soon there is quite an accumulation of logs around that spar tree. The high climber has gone on ahead to get the next spar tree ready for operation.

The whole idea of the spar tree is to lift the front end of a log up off the ground, so it don't stub into stumps and bushes and get caught there and have to be handjacked clear, as must be done with a ground lead. By the time the log being hauled has reached near the spar tree it's hanging in the air clear. The donkey engine reverses and drops it; chain is unfastened and hauled back to next log.

A rigging somewhat similar is fixed across the skid road tracks from a spar tree on the other side, and the logs is pulled to the rollaway to be loaded on the logging cars and hauled away—nowadays direct to the mill. With the logs all pulled into the rollaway, the spar tree is chopped down and bucked and becomes logs along with the rest. And the operation moves on ahead.

I run one of these little timber locomotives with the big rear wheels and string of logging cars and narrow gauge tracks for upwards of seven, eight months, till the time of my bad accident. Run it down to the river alongside the rollaway and supervised the unloading.

Things was changing pretty fast about this time. Logger's skid road was either shifted to train tracks or rotted away and was no more, and the bullocks changed to soup and stew meat.

FOR AWHILE the Kemptons' skid road and mine sort of run along together. It wasn't long after the police had found out about the Kemptons' past that the big forest fire occurred.

I've fought many a forest fire in my time, some big and some little. It's a cinch you can't be too careful in a forest. Fires start easy from a cigarette or pipe ashes or a little campfire or even sparks from a cable being dragged over the ground or sparks from a locomotive or from hot ashes dumped out of a stove, a few red hot coals overlooked. Swish. And she's going great guns and nigh impossible to stop. I've seen fire in green timber travel fast as six miles an hour —crown fire it's called, burning in the tops of the trees, and then maybe whip around and burn back over the same timber burning lower this time. Smoke condenses from a green timber fire—sap out of the trees—and falls all over you like a rain of sticky syrup, ten miles away. About the only protection and fire

fighting apparatus we had was fire breaks and back fires. Dynamite didn't come in till later.

When I was working for the Hillsborough Light and Power Company I was sent with a crew of fifteen men to help fight a fire west of Salem. That fire burned three and a half weeks. If it wasn't for the fact that timber growed so fast in that wet coastal country of Oregon and Washington, I figure it'd all been gone long ago, what with forest fires and the wasteful methods of early-day logging. In addition to which, I've heard it said that the early tribes of Indians done their hunting by setting forest fires in a kind of triangle with a narrow mouth and waiting at the mouth for the deer and other game to come bounding out, killing them as they come with bow and arrows and later with guns. Then the Indians just left that fire going to burn itself out.

Our method of making a firebreak eight to twenty feet wide, depending on ground and location, was to cut down all trees and brush in that area with hand axes, then to go over the ground with a mattock. Make the break far enough away from the fire so you have a chance to complete it before the fire reaches you. Then keep your crew patrolling day and night along that break, riding to points where the fire is closest and stamping out any sparks and trash that comes across. Sometimes the fire manages to jump the break and then you have to start in all over again several miles away, windward of the fire.

One of the worst fires I ever seen and fought occurred during the time I worked for Mr. Kempton. A big bunch of us—maybe forty including kids, almost all the married people and a few bachelors like me—went on a berry picking expedition to a place we knowed about where you could pick berries, standing in one place, a quart at a time about as fast as you could move your hands. You could find all kinds of berries at this place—salmon berries, blackberries, raspberries, gooseberries, huckleberries. It was higher up in the Cascades than camp was.

We went in wagons drawed by company horses, flat-bed wagons, whole families and their dogs, and just camped out under the trees, some with tents and some without. Wasn't the rainy season, about the middle of summer. About a third of our camp was there. Even took a little baby along that required a nursing bottle, nine, ten months old. I'd suggested we take along a cow for fresh milk, and the family hitched on one of the four company cows behind the wagon. I did the milking, and that milk was in popular demand, not only with the Smith family for the baby, but in all the other camps.

We was there almost two weeks. Did everything right in camp. Boiled the berries in big washtubs, added sugar, then sterilized the jars over open campfires, enough berries to last the whole winter for everybody. Women did all the cooking and canning. Men did the berry picking, wood-chopping, whiskey drinking, and jawing. Children did pretty much what they pleased. It was a real vacation for them. They went around barefooted, the boys without shirts, and got a lot of sunshine. This trip we canned 7,500 quarts of berries.

Courtesy Oregon Historical Society

**The Tillamook burns. Close up of a forest fire northwest of Salem.**

WHEN we was about ready to leave there, we woke up one night smelling smoke. The men got together and sniffed and smelled and couldn't see any fire anywhere, just the smoke, and decided we was safe enough for the time being, better wait till morning. Believe me, we begun packing before daylight. Smoke getting thicker and thicker by the minute. Morning come, and we could just make out one another, it was that dark. And we was on the wind side of the fire and it was coming fast.

Everybody tore around camp, working like fury to be packed and outa there. Wagons begun to roll down the road through a little gully and onto a flat. That fire was whipping in on both sides of us, a crown fire and moving fast, one arm of it running north past us and the other arm south. We made tracks, the last of us, and barely got out of there before the fire closed in from both sides and burned back over where our berry camp had been.

We didn't stop after we was out of it either. Kept the wagons rolling, mostly downhill toward the river. Unhitched the cow, leaving her to make her own way back home or get caught, whichever might happen.

That was one of the biggest fires early Oregon ever had. Burned over hundreds of miles of timber before it run its course, and now it was heading for the Kempton Lumber Company and the Kempton mills, the way the wind was blowing.

When we got to camp, every last hand was at work about two miles above the main camp and toward the forest fire. They had already dug holes and buried all machinery and tools not needed for fighting the blaze. Nearly a hundred men was at work by the time we joined forces with them.

The wind had now shifted some and give us more time, and Kempton decided to widen the fire break. He was cleaning out everything in a strip a hundred yards wide and six miles long. Chopping down trees and scrub, hauling off logs and stumps and brush with fifty, sixty bulls, three yoke oxen to a team.

Men worked in shifts twenty-four hours a day, slept with their clothes on, women doing the cooking. They'd snatch a meal or a fifteen-minute nap and go right back to work. I don't think Kempton took any naps at all the whole time we was fighting that fire.

My job was to bring water to camp. I had a crew of five men and run a one-inch pipe from a stream two miles back up in the woods down to the camp, gravity flow. Took two and a half days to run that pipe down. The water was good, but smoky tasting from the fire which was burning upstream, and was the color of vinegar.

After the fire break was finished we kept twenty-four hour patrol on it and some of the men begin to get a little sleep at last (after three days) but stayed ready to be called in case the fire

Courtesy Oregon Historical Society

**Portland, 1903, about the period when Reno and his group would make it to town to go as far as their dough would take them.**

jumped the break anywhere. It finally came down to the edge of the fire break in two, three places, and all hands pitched in to smother and stomp out all the burning limbs and bark blown into the cleared area or across it.

When it got that close we kept wet handkerchiefs tied around our noses and mouths, and even then it was hard to breathe. Later we learned that smoke was so thick folks living sixty miles away had to keep lamps lighted in broad daylight to see anything. The sun looked like a spatter of red paint, wiggly and shimmery through the haze, and you could look right at it without even blinking.

We saved the Kempton place itself but the Kemptons lost much valuable timber property which they was cutting on lease and it hurt their pocketbooks plenty—slowed down the work to a stall for months.

THERE IS still another kind of skid road or skid row, that segment of town generally so known, but also by other names as well. Portland and Astoria was full of whoopie places flourishing full blast and legal before regulation was passed to ban them. At this period I am writing about they was just getting organized, and reached their peak early in 1900 before laws went into effect barring legalized gambling and legalized prostitution.

Loggers was mostly bachelors, men on the loose. They lived mighty lonesome womanless lives in the scattered camps that was sometimes twenty, thirty miles from any town. So it was that two, three times a year, around Christmas and Fourth of July, they'd draw their pay and light out for Portland or Astoria or Seattle to blow the roll on a huge bender and come back or move on to another camp, red-eyed sober for another three, four months.

But this type wasn't so typical in my day as a little later on when the Swedes and Norwegians flocked in by the thousands. Oh, they was some like this, enough I guess. But in my time more often it happened that an engine would quit or it was too rainy to log, and then the boss would say to the foreman, which was me, "Take the boys in for a few days, Reno. Everybody back on Tuesday. Donkey oughta be ready by then." Or, "We'll have a new boiler by then," or a new fitting, or the weather would be improved.

If he was a goodhearted owner he'd say, "And here's my contribution to the festivities," like Mr. Kempton always done, and hand the foreman twenty, thirty dollars in gold or greenbacks. The boys would draw their back wages and hook onto a steamer or go by wagon or by train, however it was needful to reach town. One time they was a rate war between the new railroad and the steamships plying between Portland and Astoria, and you could go the whole distance of more than a hundred miles for two-bits. I always preferred boats to trains, although liking both. But I had a sort of hankering for the slow easy glide of the river.

Generally we was partial to Portland because it was bigger and grander—and safer. Astoria was always full of sailors. Portland had its share too, as a sea-going vessel port even though a hundred miles inland, which most folks don't know. But the sailors was better behaved in Portland; they sort of felt they owned Astoria, which was built, a good deal of it, over the water. In fact, many places when you went to the backhouse, its seats was out over the water. Many a man that disappeared went through them holes with weights tied on him.

We always went to town in bunches. On one of them trips I got throwed in jail. It happened like this. We'd come off the boats in our lumber boots with the calks in them—on boats they made us stay down on second deck to keep from scuffing up the flooring. We'd troop off the boat into town, big bunch of us, ten, eleven, fifteen men and walking along the sidewalk we'd scuff our boots and make the pavement click and the sparks fly, let the town know the loggers was coming to paint it red. Wide red galluses, wool shirts, shagged jeans or pants—that is cut or ripped off just above the boot tops—logging boots. Many was big fellers, not necessarily tall but big all over and husky, they had to be. Oh, it wasn't difficult to recognize a logging bunch when they come to town.

We'd generally divide our money equal shares. Man have fifty dollars, another

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# The Cherokees Remember Their Badmen

## Who can better evaluate a man than his own people?

By JACK F. KILPATRICK

Illustrated by Charles Clayton

THE OKLAHOMA Cherokees exhibit little tendency to glamorize those of their fellow tribesmen who rode across the history of the Indian Territory one jump ahead of the law in both its red and white versions. They remember their badmen, but they do not remember them as being any larger than life-size. In fact, a tribal compulsion to literalness and exactitude accounts in no small measure for Cherokee refusal to concur in the white man's estimate of some of the scofflaws who, with varying degrees of success, shot it out with the deputy marshals from Judge Isaac C. Parker's Federal Court at Ft. Smith, Arkansas.

Some random jottings in a collection of manuscripts written in the Cherokee language point up this sturdy disagreement with staid history and yellow journalism alike. These memorabilia, penned by someone who lived in the Cookson Hills, the heart of the old outlaw country, are regrettably brief; but they ring with a simple sincerity, and they catch oral tradition on the wing.

One of these memoranda records the words of Billy Pigeon, known to the Cherokees as Wili Woyi. Now Billy Pigeon enjoyed a signal distinction among Indian Territory outlaws: he made Judge Parker lose face from one end of the hill-country to the other. Charged, rightly or wrongly, with the murder of Deputy United States Marshal Jim Richardson, he defied the "Hanging Judge" and all of his works, parried by gun or guile every effort made to take him, and departed this world from his own bed—surely no small accomplishment.

Those authors who have run before the chariot of Judge Parker, and who have vicariously savored his judicial score of seventy-nine brought to the gallows, have somewhat hurried over the man who proved to be distressingly uncooperative in bringing the bag up to a good round eighty. To them Billy Pigeon was just another gunslinger who managed to luck out. The Cherokees beg to disagree. They cheerfully admit that the Pigeon view upon the white man's law tended toward the individualistic, but Pigeon's remembrance among his own people in no way depends upon misadventures with marshals. It is somewhat strange that the chroniclers of crime in the West have not stumbled onto the fact that the ineradicable thorn in the side of the Ft. Smith court was one of the transcendentally great Cherokee medicine men of all time. By reverential general agreement he "had the utmost" in medicomagical power.

That Billy Pigeon managed to foil the likes of the lawmen of Ft. Smith is, as far as his own people are concerned, fully as worthy of comment as the success of an Albert Einstein in arriving at the sum of two and two. Even journeymen shamans are adept at that species of magic called *didisgahl(i)dhodhiyi* which enables them to make themselves invisible at will, and Billy Pigeon was the master of them all.

Oral tradition has it that those attending the great magician upon his deathbed could scarcely remain in the same room with him because of the flames that blazed out of his eyes and mouth. Even his corpse had supernatural powers. When seen in the room in which it was laid out for burial it was of normal size, but when viewed through the window it was observed to have unaccountably shrunk to the dimensions of a baby.

Here is the translation of the wizard's

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Garrison Avenue in Fort Smith, Arkansas, 1897.

Western Publications Photo File

Courtesy John Town, Bridger Montana

# RUCKUS at

AS THE CROW FLIES it was about thirty-five miles from the Circle C Ranch in Montana to the UL ranch in the muleshoe bend of the Missouri River. During pioneer days in the '80s Fort Musselshell was located on the south bank of the river where the Musselshell River flowed into the Missouri. It had been a prosperous trading post where fur traders bought beaver plews and other animal pelts from the trappers, and shipped them by steamboat to St. Louis. It was at Fort Musselshell that the riverboats tied up to load on cordwood for fuel to feed the steam boilers.

At a later date (around 1913) a former cowhand, Walter Fletcher, ran a store, saloon and post office in one of the original log cabins. He also operated a jerkline freight outfit to haul supplies for his store. Ranchers along both sides of the Missouri bought their supplies at the Fort Musselshell store, got their mail there and bellied up to the pineboard bar to drink whiskey and bottled beer. Walter Fletcher also operated a flat mud scow ferryboat, large enough to ferry freight and roundup wagons—or the new-fangled automobiles. Fletcher also ran a few head of cattle in his own brand.

Across the river on the north side the UL outfit was located in the muleshoe bend. Both the UL and Fort Musselshell were in the badlands on both sides of the Missouri, and in many places the brakes came down to the edge of the rich river bottomlands.

Let a stranger on horseback in that rough country, traveling along the dim trails that followed the river, come to the muleshoe bend with its thick growth of tall willows and dense underbrush, and he came slap-dab up to a wide stretch of muddy river. It was either turn back or swim his horse across. If he swam across and followed the river trail for a distance of a few miles he was again faced with that same wide stretch of muddy water and had to swim his horse across the second time. Consequently the muleshoe bend became known as a place where a horsebacker had to swim the Missouri twice to get to the other side.

Time had been when the muleshoe bend in the Missouri was a sort of no man's land, used by horse thieves and cattle rustlers, with the trading post and saloon at Fort Musselshell their headquarters. Horse thieves and cattle rustlers swam their horses and cattle across the river at the crossing, and in those days they posed a sizeable threat to the cattlemen of Montana.

IT WAS DURING late August of 1913 that Jake Myers, the Circle C foreman and wagon boss, sent me and another cowpuncher named Walt Sizer on an

**Right. Walt Fletcher's store, saloon and post office at Fort Musselshell. 1913.**



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**Left, standing in the doorway of his saloon is Walt Fletcher. Seated, left to right: George Kuster, Del Bun, John Pynick, Bud Secrest, Fatty John Mickus.**

errand to the UL Ranch. We were to take a letter regarding the exact date the UL and other river ranchers were going to work the brushy river bottoms and brakes to brand any calves overlooked on the spring calf roundup. Jake sort of dictated the letter to the bookkeeper who typed it. It was addressed to George Kuster, foreman and wagon boss for the UL outfit. Jake would have sent the letter by mail but wasn't sure where Kuster got his mail and it might be a week or two before the letter caught up with him, so he figured his best bet was for me to deliver the letter in person. He told me if Kuster didn't aim to start for a couple of weeks I was to come back, but that if he started in a couple of days I might as well stay and rep for the Circle C. To save time he told me to take the Tin Lizzie and throw my bedroll and saddle in the flivver.

"Mebbe," Jake decided, "in case the UL is short-handed you better take Walt Sizer along."

So me'n Walt Sizer, with our saddles and beds loaded in the Ford, left the ranch about sunrise. As I said before it was a thirty-five mile trip as the crow flies but by the old roundup trail it was close to forty-five miles along a dim road that was seldom used, with grass in the deep ruts made by freight wagons during the rainy season. You had to guess where the road had been, and you had to know the country. Regardless.

The battered old Tin Lizzie at the Circle C Ranch had had a lot of hard usage and abuse. It was used in wild cross-country chases after coyotes and prairie wolves. Every tire had its quota of slow leaks from prickly pear and pin cushion cactus which made almost invisible punctures, impossible to detect, and the tires had to be hand pumped every twenty-four hours or so.

A couple of weeks before when Jake was driving hell bent for election, the brake lining had gone out without his knowledge and when he came to a barb-wire gate he slammed down on the useless foot pedal and hit the gate with a wide open throttle. The severed barb wires sang past like angry hornets, cracking the windshield and smashing the brass-bound headlights. And nothing had been repaired. Everybody on the ranch drove like that, but the rattle-trap bucket-of-bolts was tough regardless, and she still had a lot of mileage in her tough guts.

On the trip to the UL Ranch I carried a five-gallon can of gas, two quarts of oil, a spare wishbone, a couple of brand new inner tubes, a lot of dry patches and a vulcanizing set. Also two new casings, a large hand pump, half a dozen 2x12 blocks to prop up the jack, and a water bucket to fill the radiator that was apt to overheat and boil in hot weather. And there was a Winchester carbine slung in a saddle scabbard behind the front seat.

Walt and I both packed Colt .45 six-shooters tucked in the waistbands of our Levi's as most cowhands did as a matter of habit. Walt Sizer had the build of a welterweight and could handle himself in any rough and tumble, no holds barred free-for-all, and was a good man to take along.

It was Sizer's first trip to the UL Ranch and the Missouri River badlands country, and the twenty-five-year-old ranch hand, hard-rock miner, tinhorn

**It's not every day a cowboy can get his eyes crossed twice— once by booze and once by a wagon spoke alongside the head!**

# Old Fort Musselshell

By WALT COBURN

Photos Courtesy Author

Courtesy John Town, Bridger, Montana

**Fort Musselshell ferry, about 1915.**

gambler and sort of a Jack-of-all-trades still had a lot to learn about punching cows. But he was quick to catch onto the ropes and eager and willing to learn. On the other hand I was a few years younger than Sizer and had been trying to make a hand since I was six years old, and the pair of us got along right from the start.

JAKE MYERS was forever warning us about being trigger happy, never to start any kind of a ruckus or get into any tight that called for gunplay. We were told to stay out of trouble, but that if we got crowded into it to hit first and hit hard, and play out our tough hands. The Circle C was a tough outfit and Jake Myers was a tough cowhand and wagon boss, and some of that toughness was bound to rub off on me.

I had taken enough boxing lessons from my older half-brother Wallace, who had what it took in boxing science to make a welterweight champ, to handle myself in the ring or outside and I'd been licked enough times in rough and tumble brawls to be cautious and wise—not cocky enough to get my ears knocked down as I had on several occasions in the past. But I still had the mistaken notion I was tough.

That morning at sunrise when me'n Sizer left the Circle C Ranch we were feeling our oats, excited and full of beans like healthy young animals. A give-a-damn-Jones feeling and the spirit of high adventure. I was behind the wheel of the topless Tin Lizzie, with no windshield, with the throttle open and the wind in our faces, hats yanked down as we bounced and jolted along the dim rutted road, singing songs in disjointed barber-shop harmony, stopping now and then at waterholes to fill the boiling hot radiator, checking the tires with the tire gauge.

Sizer wondered if there was any chance of our crossing the river to take a look around at the old Fort Musselshell log cabins before we went to the UL Ranch. I had been telling him about the Judith Basin Vigilantes hanging horse thieves and cattle rustlers to cottonwood trees along the riverbank and leaving them hanging as a warning, and how the captains of the river steamboats used to point them out to the passengers. I told Sizer that if we got to Fort Musselshell early enough, I reckoned we might have time to cross on the ferry—that I'd known Walter Fletcher since I was a kid when he worked for the Circle C and that we'd be more than welcome.

When we reached the bald tip of a hogback ridge I came to a halt. From that lookout point we could get a panoramic view of the wide Missouri and the muleshoe bend, a partly hidden view of the old log building at Fort Musselshell, and a glimpse of the flat mud scow ferryboat tied up on the south bank of the river. But we couldn't see the UL Ranch for the giant cottonwoods and tall willow thickets and brush.

"If all goes well," I told Sizer, "we'll be bellied up at the bar of Fletcher's saloon with a cold bottle of beer an hour from now. How are you fixed for money?"

"Flat broke," Sizer admitted with a grin.

"That goes for me. But my credit's good at Walt Fletcher's place. Three 'Walts' should make a good hand, like three aces. A pat hand."

I released the hand brake and we charged down the steep slope, wide open, to the rollicky tune of "Hell Amongst the Yearlings." We flattened out at the foot of the grade on level river bottomland. A recent cloudburst had washed out the road in places, so we took turns with the short-handled shovel that was an integral part of the Tin Lizzie gear, filling the rain-washed ruts with dirt we tromped down solid enough to keep the loaded flivver's wheels from sinking hub

**Town Bros. cattle in the barn and corrals at the old UL Ranch in later years.**

Courtesy John Town, Bridger, Montana

deep. Every time we crossed one of the filled-in ditches I had to take a short run at it at high speed. If I went at it slow and easy I knew the wheels were apt to sink axle deep and we'd be stuck until a team of horses pulled us out. I kept my fingers crossed every time I gave her the gun and somehow our luck held out. We got to calling the flivver the "ditch-jumping Tin Lizard." All we needed was an eagle feather tied to her tail and she'd take off and soar the sky like a bird.

WE WERE about a quarter mile of the ferry crossing and in sight of the log cabin store on the other side of the river when I became conscious of one thing. Each time the front wheel hit the filled ruts I felt the steering post jerk a little, and I was keenly aware that the tricky wishbone steering apparatus was apt to bend.

Directly ahead was a wide stretch of sandwash. In my eagerness to get to the crossing I hit that soft sand wide open. A damn fool thing to do. The front wheels skidded as I fought the wheel, the rear wheels spinning, throwing soft sand behind in a cloud. The only thing was to keep moving, not lose momentum.

It was only a matter of seconds until we were clear of the sandy wash and on solid ground, but long enough to bend the wishbone rods. The front wheels wobbled and it was impossible to steer twenty feet without going off the road into the brush, so the only thing to do was to stop, jack up the front wheels and put in the spare steering apparatus. It was all in a day's work for a Tin Lizzie jockey, and there was no use cussing about it. It was merely a question whether to tackle the job now or next morning. Even if everything went smoothly it would be dark by the time we got the wishbone replaced.

We were at the Fort Musselshell Crossing and we could see that the road to the UL Ranch had been completely washed out by the cloudbuster. It would take a day's work with a team and slip scraper to fill the gap and make the road passable. So me'n Sizer decided to leave the useless flivver where it sat, spend the night at Walt Fletcher's place and get an early start fixing the flivver, then ride to the UL Ranch on horses we could borrow from Fletcher. That was the easy solution to our problem and we were secure in the knowledge that there was no danger of anything being stolen from the Tin Lizard.

We walked to the riverbank and started hollering for Walt Fletcher to fetch the ferry across, but there was no answer from the far bank. It looked like nobody was home and our luck had run out. It was Sizer who found the rowboat tied up in a clump of tall willows and we soon located the oars cached in the underbrush.

While I was no expert oarsman I had learned how to handle a rowboat on this same wide Missouri when I was a kid, and being a good swimmer I had no fear of drowning and I knew that Sizer was an excellent swimmer too. So rowing the lightweight boat across was easy

Courtesy John Town, Bridger, Montana

**Walt Fletcher's freight outfit at Dodson, Montana.**

pickings.

The log cabin combination saloon, store and post office was located above the high water mark of flood waters. We could see that the door was closed and that there were no horses in the pasture, and no sign of life at the saloon or at the log cabin where Fletcher lived. When we peered through an unwashed window of the saloon we caught sight of a man moving around behind the pineboard bar. He was about six feet tall, with a week's growth of black whiskers. He was filling an empty whiskey bottle from a gallon jug and as we watched he tilted the jug over his elbow and took a long swig.

"He shore ain't Walt Fletcher," I said in a lowered tone in answer to Sizer's quizzical look.

Sizer shoved open the door and we both stepped inside and kicked it shut. The black-whiskered gent put the jug down and scowled at us.

"We could use a couple of shots of that likker, mister," Walt Sizer spoke up.

"Let's see the color of your money," the man said.

"Where's Walt Fletcher?" I asked.

"Walt Fletcher's gone to Lewistown with his freight wagons. He left me in charge here." Black Whiskers put the jug under the bar and the bottle on the back bar out of our reach.

"We're reps from the Circle C outfit," I told him, "on our way to the UL Ranch. The road's washed out and our Tin Lizzie's broke down. My name's Walt Coburn and my credit's good with Fletcher."

"I don't give a damn if you're Jesus

*(Continued on page 58)*

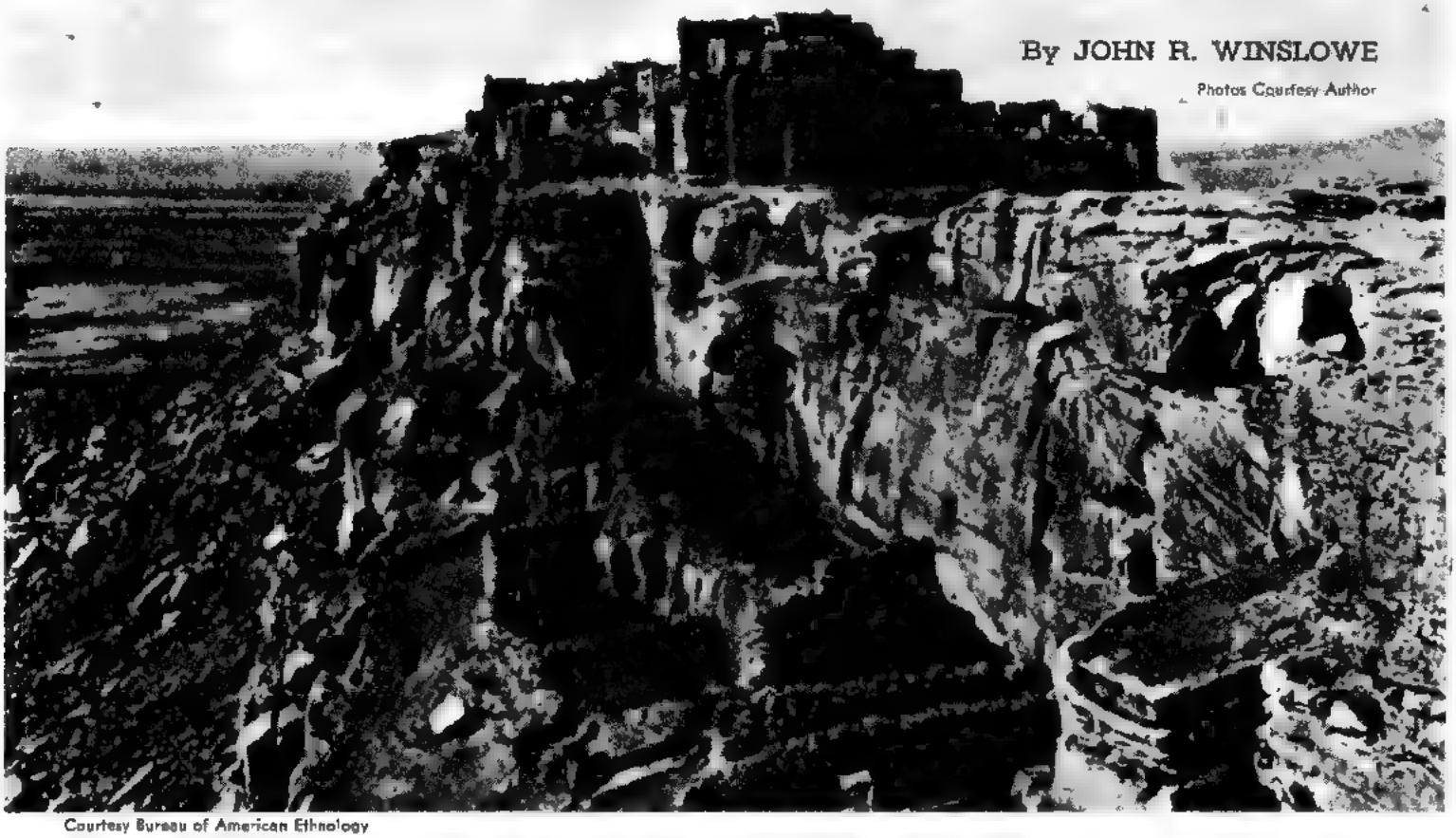
**The old UL Ranch headquarters, located on the north side of the Missouri River from the mouth of the Musselshell where the Missouri makes a sharp bend.**

Courtesy Phillips County News

# ANCIENT SALT TRAILS

By JOHN R. WINSLOWE

Photos Courtesy Author



Courtesy Bureau of American Ethnology

**Ancient Walpi pueblo dispatched salt trains annually to Zuni.**

A SMASHING flood rolled through a side arm of Arizona's Querino Canyon engulfing the Hopi Indian salt train. Twenty men and boys and forty burros managed to reach safety on a bench under an overhanging cliff wall. Thirty burros were drowned and their loads of dried peaches and corn were destroyed.

Pole Hongrave described the disaster after his train camped under the cottonwoods on the Rio Puerco River below old Houck trading post. On finishing the account he said, "Gimme some hors' liniment, axle grease and sulphur." In those years such ingredients were used to doctor injured animals.

When I visited the camp that night more details were divulged. The train had begun passage through the canyon that morning, having traveled some ninety meandering miles across the desert from the ancient village of Oraibi. The sudden noise of torrential water hurling logs before it, gave a belated warning. Then after the high rise subsided and before the train could get strung out, two cougars (mountain lions) charged from a cave-like hole in the solid sandstone wall. In minutes, before the beasts could be clubbed and scared off, a number of the remaining burros had been clawed and fanged badly. It was for these that Pole (Poly—Butterfly) was buying the medicine.

The salt trails from the villages in north-central Arizona were used before the birth of Christ. Except in one instance they converged from all the villages past the ruins of Awatobi which was destroyed in 1700, to the Giants Chair and down through the Butte country. The instance not applying was that, for a few centuries, the Oraibi Hopis journeyed west to mine salt in the Little Colorado River canyon where it joins the big Colorado. The main salt trail followed a southeastward course to the Rio Puerco. From near Houck it traced on about forty-five miles to Zuni, thence south to their sacred salt lake.

Hopis from long-vanished pueblos scattered through northern Arizona were using this trail long before the nine villages occupied the sites they do today. Thousands upon thousands of moccasined feet wore it deep, even across solid beds of stone.

Not only they but other pueblo-dwelling Indians of the Southwest made annual pilgrimages to the lake. In addition to Zuni Lake they also journeyed to salt beds in what is now Torrance County, New Mexico, north of Pinos Wells.

THE SALT TRAINS were picturesque, heralded in story and song even before the coming of the Europeans. Of course the *Americano* was to add trimmings and changes of the ancient ballad according to his own interpretation. One of them in particular is known as "The Song of the Spanish Bell." The original authors are unknown and it appears to have begun as adventurous folklore. There are a dozen versions. One of the earliest to give the salt trains a measure of immortality at least a century ago begins with these lines:

*Know you the trail where the salt bands go?*
*Close by the rock where they carved their names? [El Morro]*
*Know you the sandhills of the Navajo,*
*And the barren mesas the Hopis claim?*
*Vanished into stark canyons of the dead,*
*Where the town and their bones are dust,*
*Their flint points broken and the desert vulture*
*Scarce can tell where the last of them fell.*

Where trails end, a sad feeling of farewell pervades. But where they cross there is laughter and the quick, eager words of men, the tinkle of bells and pad of feet. For unnumbered centuries this has been distinctive of the romantic salt trails. Once burden bearers were men and dogs, and later the good-natured beast of burden, the burro.

The most colorful group of people appearing off the trails near Houck, es-

## "the desert vulture scarce can tell where the last of them fell..."

tablished in 1874 and which I ran in 1921, comprised the Hopi salt trains. The short, chunky, sunburnt men wore brilliantly colored neckerchiefs to hold square-cropped hair in place. They walked behind strings of burros in single file, the lead animal adorned with a brass bell. En route to the salt lake the Hopis packed corn, dried peaches, pottery and basketry for sale or barter.

Annual pilgrimages were necessary to supply the mesa villages with salt. Broken out in chunks, it was muddy gray, red, yellow, brown, blue or coal black in color. By my time salt was available to them in pure clean form in all trading posts, yet until recent years the Hopis would have none of the packaged goods. The manufactured salt, they claimed, was not nearly so strong and tasty as that from the old lake bed. Moreover, certain colors were necessary for ceremonial purposes. Even the Navajo medicine men used some of the colors for rain making.

These picturesque, plodding salt gatherers of the Southwest made journeys which intrigue the imagination. They crossed what was to them the lands of aliens. The desert was scorching hot and a menace with its suddenly descending storms. Often the Indians were forced to seek refuge on high ground or against sheltering cliff walls from hails and heavy rains. In the mountains, if traveling too early in the spring or too late in the fall, they encountered snowstorms and low temperatures. Yet theirs was a happy mode of existence.

A Hopi salt train from some village came by Houck about every three weeks. From them we bought shelled corn, pottery and baskets—but never the dried peaches which were dark and saturated with sand.

The speckled blue corn was weighed and bought at the stone warehouse. Known as the "Jew" of the Southwest, the Hopis heaped their baskets and pottery on the store counter. Having plenty of time to make a deal, they began their bartering by quoting the highest price entering their minds, with no expectation of obtaining anywhere near the asking figure. They made it solely to bargain down.

With me that system did not work for I knew exactly what the cost of their handcraft should be. Naming it, I always let the matter rest there while continuing to wait on Navajo trade. In this way I outlasted the timeless Hopis. What we could retail the baskets and pottery for governed what we could pay. We did not buy the woven plaques in those

**Pole Hongrave made many trips with the salt bands from old Oraibi.**

days because they could not be sold even to a marveling tourist who sometimes came by on the Old Trails Highway.

THE SALT TRAINS, ranging from 75 to 150 burros, always strung out single file across the country like a sinuous snake. Widely separated, each individual section had its own handlers following behind the floppy-eared animals. Quite often they stretched a mile in this fashion, the leaders out of sight on the juniper and piñon timbered mesas. The slow moving caravan gradually melted into oblivion in the dark forest. This cool timber country which stretched south from Houck into the mountains must have been a mighty welcome relief from the desert.

About two weeks later, the trains reappeared on the trail in the same steady, tireless march. Every burro was loaded to capacity with rock salt. The Hopis' goods had been disposed of to Zuni Indians in their village where the trailers were always entertained with dancing ceremonies and chanting, or to Navajos and other Indians and traders in the region traversed.

At Houck I became well acquainted with many Hopis in the trains. Pole was one of the first of his people to receive an education. He was a graduate of Carlisle University under the name of "Payes'tewa," and lived to be ninety years old.

Two Oraibi groups, labeled the "Hostiles" and the "Friendlies," had their big separation in 1906. The Friendlies under Chief Wilson Tewquatewa remained in possession of the village. The Hostiles led by Chief Yeoukema established Hoteville. The latter opposed government schools and was thereafter a source of trouble to the agent at Keams Canyon, spending many years in jail there.

Following this split, Pole went west and settled at Moencopi, an off-shoot farming village of Oraibi (in Spanish times). Most of Pole's relatives remained at Oraibi. As a leader he was greatly respected for his intelligence and shrewd advice. He was also an inveterate traveler, always on the go. For years he explored the western Navajo canyon country, searching for the fabled ruined city of Kwashtima from where the first Hopis supposedly spread into this world. He carved his name simply "POLE" on many a cliff wall.

He was also a visitor to the pueblos of New Mexico where he was held in high esteem as a wise man, and was well known from Taos to Acoma. To mention him as a friend was immediately to be

**Salt trains followed the age old trails down through the butte country.**

**New Mexico's Zuni ceremonial dancers often entertained visiting bands of Hopi salt traders.**

accepted as one. His presence with the trains was to take salt back to Moencopi. The men of that village were not then using the western trail to the mines at the junction of the Colorado Rivéra.

Before Spanish settlement in the Southwest, from whom they acquired beasts of burden, the trains were composed of human beings. Down past the future site of Houck they traveled in large, well armed parties. The salt was packed north on their backs.

These annual journeys were filled with danger. The Navajo and Apache were poised to surround and kill them to the last man. In past centuries there were many times when only the Hopis' fleetness of foot, even packing a heavy load of salt, saved their lives.

The western salt trail formerly used by the Oraibians was even more fraught with disaster than the trail to Zuni. It passed southwest across the Denehbetoh Valley, crossed Hopi Mesa to Clan Rocks, thence via Bodeway Mesa into the Little Colorado River canyon. It was all hot, dry desert to Clan Rocks at Willow Springs. To make this leg of the return journey woven willow water bottles coated with piñon pitch were buried along the route going out. Picked up on return, this supply enabled them to negotiate the waterless desert to Oraibi.

Willow Springs provided a good water supply. While resting over there, going and coming, the Hopis carved their clan symbols on the great blocks of red sandstone. These petroglyphs remain there today, avidly photographed by tourists on U. S. Highway 89. Even though most are centuries old, they can be readily identified as clan symbols.

The western salt trail was also subject to the rigors of climatic conditions, but even worse were the sudden attacks by roving bands of Havasupai, Piute, Ute, and Navajo Indians. For this reason, beginning about 1885, expeditions to the Little Colorado were slowly abandoned. Finally all Hopi salt trains were diverted to Zuni in New Mexico. On this long trail the Navajo and Apaches attacks ended shortly before 1900. No one bothered the Hopis and they faced only heat and cold and storms.

HARRY SIEKESTWA and Joe Pinto were two other salt train leaders coming by Houck with whom I became well acquainted. Friendship with them and Pole endured until their deaths.

Each salt train was accompanied by a number of selected boys nearing the age to be initiated into the secret societies. For this they had to learn prayers and chants and religious history. Each night in camp they spent hours under the tutelage of an old man well versed in the ceremonies. Their chanting was done to the beat of a cottonwood drum. I learned some of the songs but not much of their language.

Train leaders related legends pertaining to their individual villages, history which the neophytes committed to memory. Thus it was that Pinto from Sichomovi told how the original village was down near the Little Colorado. It stood on the semi-desert near the present site of Winslow, where in 1876 stones from the long abandoned pueblo were used in the construction of Mormon settlers' homes at Sunset City. For some reason, fertile farming land on the river played out. They then moved north to the foot of the mesa on which Sichomovi stands today. The Spaniards found them there in 1540. Due to later difficulties with the conquerors and following the general pueblo Indian rebellion of 1680, the village was rebuilt on top of the mesa for purposes of defense.

Pinto, a man then past seventy, had been making the salt train trips since boyhood. While holding over at Houck one time he related the circumstances of undergoing his first Apache attack. This fight must have occurred in the 1850s. The train was surprised in the Butte country by the dreaded enemy who had been raiding Navajos to the far north near the San Juan River. While retreating south toward their White Mountain fastnesses the Apaches encountered the train by accident.

They charged out of the washes and arroyos on ponies, using lances and arrows. Racing down one side of the train they killed burros and men, all the unfortunates who did not have time to dart to safety in the black rocks. Pinto escaped by crawling under a low ledge. Being small in size he was not discovered there. From concealment he watched the bloody massacre.

The howling Apaches swung back in a second charge to finish off what animals and wounded men they could locate lying helpless on the ground. When they had disappeared southward Pole emerged from concealment to find only three other survivors. Four burros still packed salt. They started north, a sad and disheartened remnant of the band. Only three miles up the trail the desert was abruptly filled with mounted Navajo fighting men who stormed up out of the swales and from between the sandhills too swiftly to be avoided. But the Navajos, intent on overhauling the raiders, thundered past the Hopis with hardly a second glance.

After reaching Sichomovi, Pinto guided back a large war party to recover the precious salt abandoned on the trail. Bodies of their tribesmen were deposited in caves and fissures of nearby volcanic buttes.

Pole well remembered the time (about 1870) when his salt train met a "suicide" party. It was the custom that when a leader fell into irreparable political disgrace in his village to secretly arrange with an enemy, usually the Navajos, to kill him for a price at a prearranged place. Such "suicide" immediately restored him to public respect and esteem because he had met death as a brave man fighting the enemy. This was an ancient deal with the Hopis. Indeed, it was almost mandatory and those accompanying the fated man knew they were also in danger of losing their lives. But then, they were the leader's best friends who would be with him in the other world if the worst happened.

On Steamboat Wash, Pole's train met a group of twelve Hopis from Walpi Pueblo led by Masale (Crossed Feathers). They were returning home from a visit to the Fort Defiance Indian Agency where they had been given many presents for "good will."

"I smelled suicide party," Pole declared, "so I insisted we not camp with them but go on far down the wash. It was always best not to interfere in such things even though you realized innocent men were going to die."

Sure enough the Navajos with whom Masale had arranged to have himself killed, struck that night. Masale was slain along with two other men in the assault. Their bodies were robbed of all jewelry, which was the price of the suiciding.

Two of the survivors reached Pole's camp at daylight. When they ventured back to the luckless site no Navajos were in the country. The bodies were buried under a light cover of sand. A year later the wind uncovered the remains. The whitened skulls were deposited at the

summit of a low sandhill on a cairn which was considered from then on to mark the eastern boundary of their country.

THAT YEAR Pole made his last trip with the salt trains, passing through Houck in November. On the previous trip, when he asked, I had promised him that if able I would go to Zuni with them. However, an early frost that fall brought on the piñon nut-buying season. We were too busy at the post for anybody to be spared.

The train made fair time and it was an easy trip from the villages down to Zuni. But on the return journey disaster threatened every mile of the way. During the first night out, a dozen burros threw their hobbles. A full day was wasted tracking them down because they made a beeline for home. Then the sky turned ominously gray and black, a sure sign of approaching stormy weather.

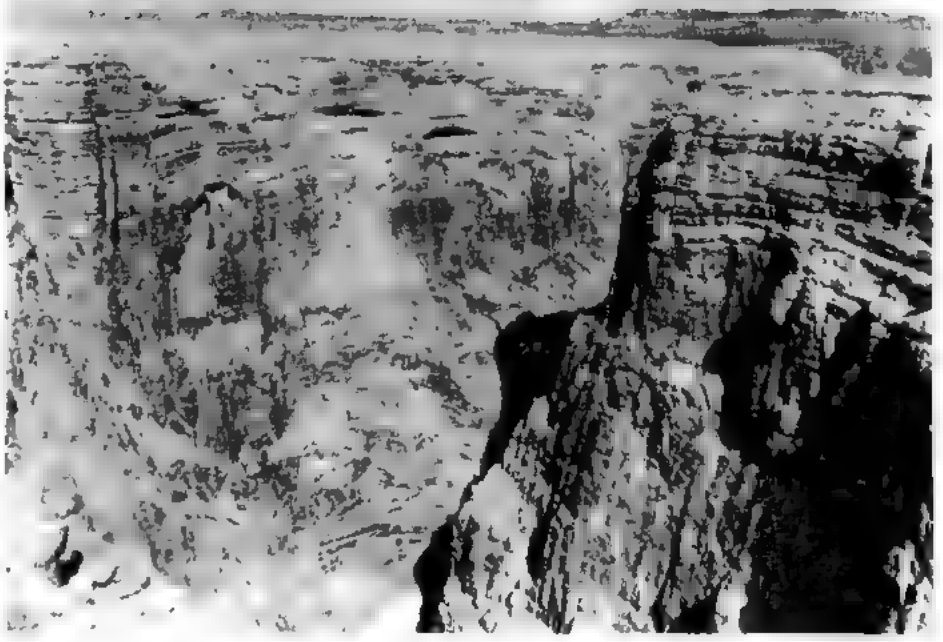
For some reason the train of 100 loaded burros did not make the regular crossing on Zuni River after getting into Arizona. The bottom was as dry as a bone and negotiable anywhere. Reaching a place of high dirt and clay banks, the Hopis simply shoved off the crumbling rim and the leading burros passed down this incline. A natural break appeared in the opposite wall downstream. The burros were headed toward it.

The first of the column had entered and was ascending when the undermined twenty-foot bank overhead fell with a roar. Confusion took over in the dense dusty cloud that the fall created. Unknown to the Hopis an earth crack existed about twelve feet back from the rim which already had widened dangerously. The vibration of the steadily walking burros at the base had shaken the overhang loose and brought it crumbling down upon them. The thirty men and boys with the train rushed in quickly to uncover the loaded animals, but they didn't manage it soon enough. Fifteen were smothered before they could be reached under the debris.

On top of the flat riverbank the salt was distributed to other loads and the train made ready to continue. Only then was it discovered that one boy was missing. With considerable apprehension the men returned to the spill. After a short period of digging they discovered the body of the ten-year-old boy under a mass of dirt. The train halted the balance of the day to make proper burial. With the body flexed in a small but deep hole, the grave was camouflaged so that enemies could not find it.

Climbing out of the Zuni River badlands the train entered the timbered country of the long-ridged mountains. That night soft white flakes began falling. The murk, without wind, was blinding. All the train could do was hold up in the shelter of the forest, where it stayed five days.

Soon the Hopis were getting short of food. They never carried more than the barest necessities. After the journey was resumed the pannier straps over the forked saddles started breaking loose. Hopi pack outfits were mostly makeshift equipment anyway. Two more days



**The Hopi Indians' western salt trail entered this canyon on the Little Colorado River.**

were lost making necessary repairs. Every day became vital to their survival and they knew it. The train courted disaster. Their supply of meat and corn was gone. On the ridges where the snow had blown off they dug edible roots but found very few. The burros moved slower than ever because of the rocks and ice.

Salt trains always fed off the country. No grain was ever given the pack animals. Now there wasn't any grass or weeds above the snow. The Hopis stopped more and more frequently to cut browse to feed the burros. Desperate as their situation was, no other course was open to them.

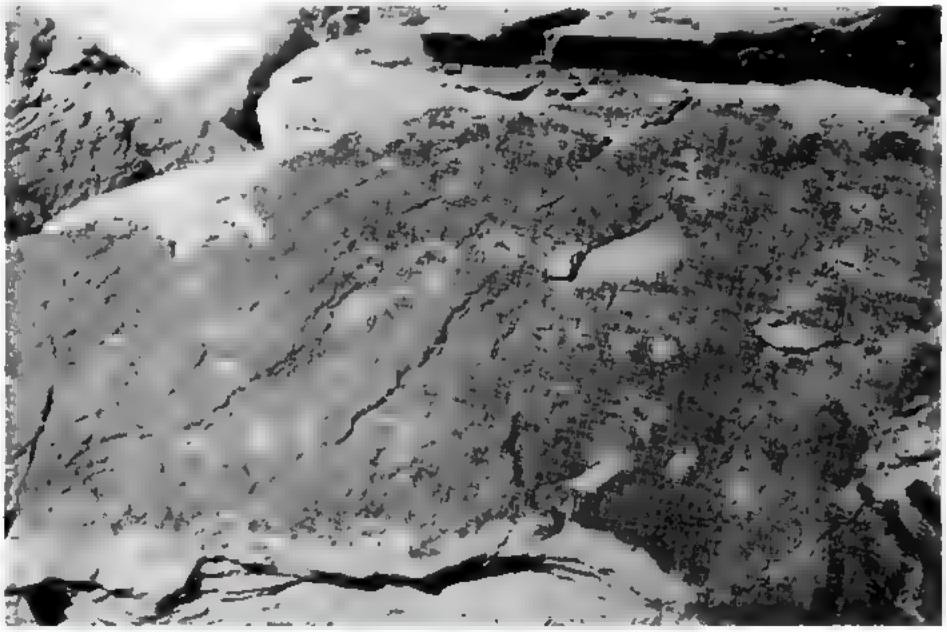
"I thought my end had come," Pole said later, "when I went over the slope with the leaders!"

He was then guiding in the forefront, trying to remember where the trail should be by near landmarks. Reaching a ridge, he started down a steep slope covered with slick glare ice where the sun had melted the snow. The burros at his heels fell and slid into him. Pole and the leaders went over a precipice. Other animals close behind crashed down upon them.

Men still safe on the high ridge sent their burros around the danger spot, and others hurried below over a rocky talus. Pole was pulled out alive, having miraculously escaped broken bones. When the

*(Continued on page 43)*

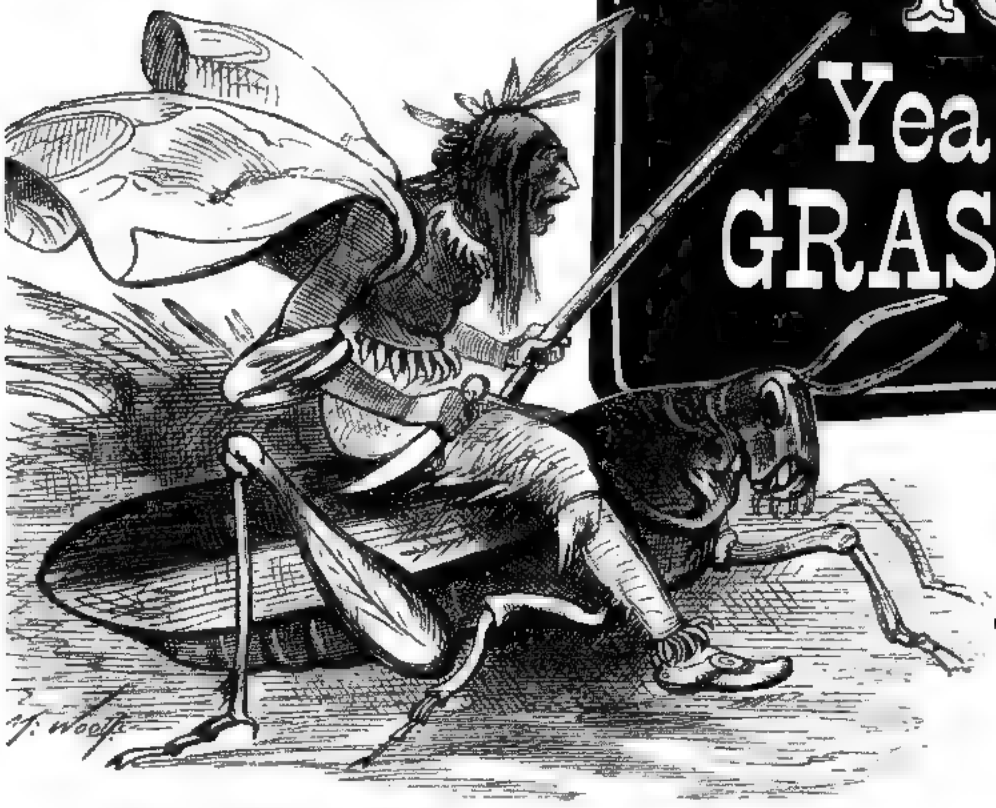
**The salt trains went into the Little Colorado River Canyon and cut their clan symbols on the rocks at Willow Springs.**



# 1874 Year of the GRASSHOPPER

By ROBERT W. RICHMOND

Illustrations Courtesy Author



**Most conversations among the homesteaders probably went like this: "Did you see what I saw?" "Yes!" "Can you believe it?" "No!"**

Courtesy Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka

**Above, drawing of "The extra inducements offered to those who would go West at the present time" from Harper's Weekly, August 29, 1874.**

FROM BIBLICAL times man has been plagued, intermittently, by insects of one kind or another and some of those plagues have been indelibly etched on the annals of both history and folklore. The grasshopper year of 1874, a frightful experience for residents of the Great Plains, was one of those historic entries which also gave rise to some stories which became a part of American folklore.

For years afterward, Westerners remembered their battles with the awesome hordes of grasshoppers and added certain embellishments to the tall tales that were rife immediately following the insect invasion.

Grasshoppers were not unknown on the Plains prior to 1874; in fact, there had been occasions when grasshoppers had been more than a mere nuisance to Kansas and Nebraska farmers. Newspapers of the 1850s recorded great quantities of the green pests in the Kansas River valley and in 1868 there was crop damage caused by grasshoppers. In August, 1868, a late afternoon train on the Union Pacific, Eastern Division, branch from Lawrence to Leavenworth was held up because great numbers of the insects had been crushed on the tracks during the day by earlier trains. Consequently, the last train down the road found the steel too slippery for good traction and the crew was forced to use sand to get the locomotive underway again.

Good stories were abroad during that same month and year, all of which overemphasized the damage done by grasshoppers. For example, this comment appeared in the Junction City *Union* on August 15: "A gentleman who came down on the freight train from Abilene the other day reports that the grasshoppers had destroyed several cords of wood belonging to the R.R. Co., and another man avers that the irrepressible insects had devoured two rods, five feet seven and three-eighths inches of stone fence for a farmer up the river. We give these statements as we heard them, and cannot vouch for their strict truth."

None of these earlier experiences with grasshoppers was impressive enough to prepare Plains people for 1874. The Panic of 1873, the ensuing depression, and a period of drought had already made life miserable for a great many settlers but economic difficulties and a lack of rain were things which most people had coped with and could understand. Nobody was ready to battle this strange phenomenon—this plague of locusts which descended on the land from the Dakotas south through Kansas in mid-summer. Even the threat of red Indians paled before the threat of green hoppers.

THE GRASSHOPPERS appeared suddenly in late July and August in such vast numbers that they blotted out the sun at times. They came in on the wind and under their own power and their approach was described as sounding like distant rain. In some places they were said to cover the earth to a depth of four to six inches and they attacked corn fields and gardens and pasture grass. People watched in amazement as food and forage disappeared almost instantly.

In Dakota Territory some settlers visiting after church noticed a dark cloud in the north and someone finally recognized it as approaching grasshoppers. People hurried home and from inside their houses watched wholesale destruction. Within an hour fields were stripped and onions and turnips were eaten out of the ground. Dakotans who let their hogs eat grasshoppers found after butchering that the pork had an odd flavor. One Dakota turkey raiser saved a part of his corn field by turning the birds loose in it. The turkeys grew fat but they too tasted strange after they were killed and marketed.

Courtesy Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka

**Cartoon drawn in 1875 by Western illustrator Henry Worrall, entitled "Grangers versus Grasshoppers—Kansas, 1874."**

Cattle and horses were tormented by the grasshoppers which crawled over them and got into their eyes, ears, and nostrils. One Dakotan reported that her father's cattle were crazed by the insects and stampeded. When he went to look for the animals he could not find them. By the time he returned to the house his clothes were in shreds, almost eaten away. In any of the places that were invaded, clothing, cotton screening and the soft wood of tool handles were devoured.

The Topeka, Kansas *Commonwealth* commented that swarms of grasshoppers had "snatched Kansas Avenue bald-headed and stripped the balance of the city as bare as a billiard ball." Since the drought had already exhausted food supplies, this editor wrote, destruction in Topeka was limited, "the only inconvenience suffered being the loss of front gates and an occasional section of picket fence. In return for this the grasshoppers attacked innumerable piles of cord wood and cut it up into very respectable chunks for the stove; this would have been a fair offset if the fiends had only taken the trouble to split it."

Facetiousness could not minimize the damage done but the eastern portion of Kansas and Nebraska did not suffer to the extent that western counties did. The severity of the plague was greatest in areas where a majority of the residents were recent arrivals. Almost all were poor when they came west and they had not had time to build up the resources necessary to combat such a disaster. Marginal agricultural operations and a lack of money allowed the pioneer nothing on which to base a comeback.

In Nebraska's Platte River valley, settlements such as Grand Island suffered heavily. The insects covered the ground like a blanket and they ate everything except the sparse sorghum crop. They ate wheat that had been shocked and rhubarb in kitchen gardens and leaves off the too few trees. They covered the rails of the Union Pacific and hindered operations just as they had done in Kansas six years before. A Nebraskan wrote that the swarms "passed over us often like vast flying squadrons" and that "it became pathetic to see a man standing . . . by his little home watching the shining clouds above and waiting to see if a changing wind would send destruction from the air and leave him and his little household destitute."

One of the most graphic descriptions of the invasion was given by a Jefferson County, Kansas resident and the feeling of helpless horror that pressed down upon those settlers is very clearly expressed by these paragraphs.

"We were at the table. . . . One of the youngsters who had gone to the well to fill the water pitcher came hurrying in, round-eyed with excitement. 'They're here! The sky is full of'm. The whole yard is crawling with the nasty things.'

*(Continued on page 38)*

**Clearing a field of grasshoppers.**

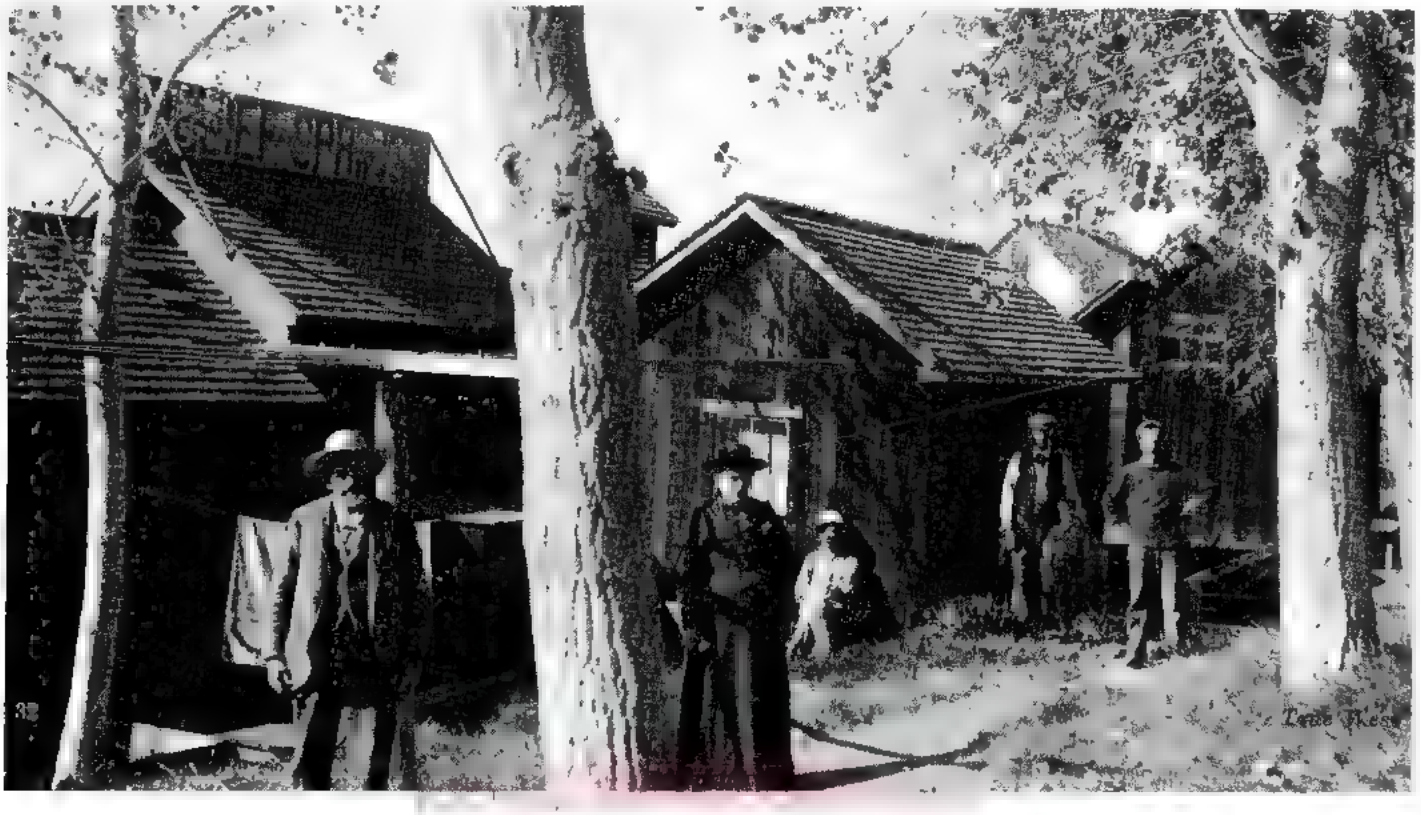
From Harper's Weekly, July 3, 1875, Courtesy Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka

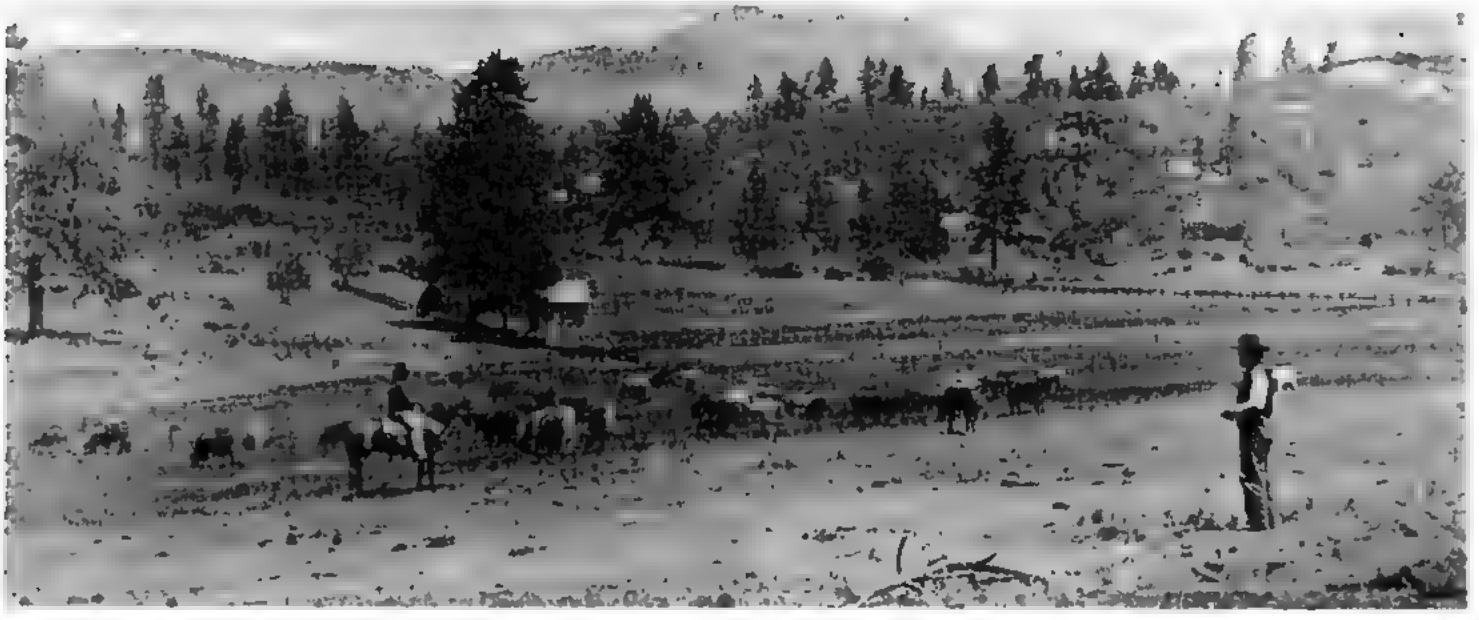
Bath houses at San Jacinto Hot Springs, formerly Branch Springs.

# TRUE WEST Scrapbook

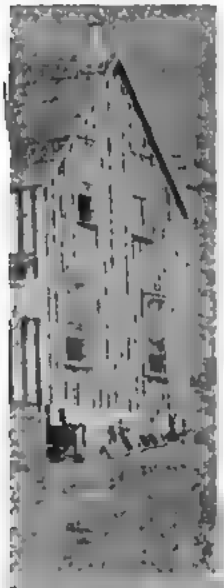
Relief Springs building appears in distance in bottom right photo.

Sidney James Branch and wife Evelyn Lucretia Sharp Branch at Relief Springs.





Relief Hot Springs in the San Jacinto Mountains.



## Photos Courtesy JUNE FORD

Sidney J. Branch came to California from New York between 1864 and August 4, 1883 when he joined the I.O.O.F. in Riverside. While searching for cattle in the San Jacinto Mountains, one of Sidney's sons located several hot springs. Sidney then staked squatter's rights and began building Relief Springs at the site.

Upon Sidney's death in 1910, the springs were sold to a Mr. Gilman and now are known as Gilman's Hot Springs. These photos depict various stages in the development of Relief Springs. Sidney's granddaughter was an aunt of Mrs. Donald Ford of Douglasflat, California.

Relief Hot Springs. Girl at far right is Florence Wilbur, Sidney's granddaughter and Mrs. Ford's aunt.

Early development of Relief Springs, San Jacinto Mountains, California.

## An evil father, a weak and easily persuaded son, composed the villainous cast of the

# TRAGEDY at Pig Pen

By MAGGIE SIMS ROBERSON

Photos Courtesy Author

THE CRACK of gunshots bounced from the hilltops a time or two—then died away in the distance. Now all was quiet, including the two pitifully still forms lying together where they had fallen. Alice Krebaum and Bill Parker of Hidalgo County, New Mexico, had been married just five months to the day, when they breathed their last on that hot evening of June 26, 1916.

They had been up that morning with the sunrise and busy with their work. Alice was painting and making big plans for their future, and Bill, with the help of a young Mexican, Andreas Valenzuela, was fencing and improving the "Pig Pen" place, bought earlier from Charlie Yarborough. The Mexican and his wife were well known to Bill and Alice, since Andreas had worked for Bill's dad, Dave Parker, for about two years before Bill married and moved to the Pig Pen.

With a hard day's work behind them, Alice and Bill had gone to the corral and cowpen about 5 or 6 p.m. to milk, leaving Bill's guns, of course, in the house. Andreas evidently knew where both the .45 six-shooter and rifle were kept as he had been with them long enough for them to trust him completely. Old Man Valenzuela, Andreas' father, was a horse of a different color, so Bill thought, since he was wanted on both sides of the line—in old Mexico for murder, and in the States for murdering three sheepherders near Carlsbad, New Mexico.

Right. Alice and Bill Parker, the year they were married. In those days, wives often had to "make a hand."

Tiburcio and Santiago Echeverri, shown working with Bill at Pig Pen, joined the search for the murderer.

After Bill and Alice moved to the Pig Pen, the old man kept coming out of Mexico to visit Andreas and his wife. Pancho Villa was kicking up quite a dust against his government at that time, and in Mexico horses, saddles, and guns were badly needed and bringing good money. So after his third trip out on this side of the line, Bill told Andreas to tell his dad to stay away or the next time he crossed the border, Bill would turn him over to the law. This evidently was what triggered the double murder

**Above, the old Parker Ranch belonging to Bill's father was six miles east of Pig Pen in Hidalgo County, New Mexico. Left, Alice in January, 1918.**

since, despite rumors and suppositions of a few, there had been no quarrel between Bill and Andreas.

The Mexican's wife, Josepha, later told that Andreas' father had been trying to put Andreas up to this dirty work for a long time. After Andreas had killed Bill (with his own gun), Alice evidently ran to Bill and Andreas shot her also, as her body had fallen across Bill's on the path leading back to the house. They were still huddled there in death the next morning when C. B. Kincheloe, a close neighbor, rode in about 5:30 a.m. to pick up Bill's wagon and team to get a load of paint, lumber and barbed wire from Animas Station.

When Kincheloe made his discovery, he hurried back home and told Bob, his son, about the murders and they quickly notified as many people as they could reach. George Godfrey, another close neighbor, and Bob went back to Bill's, and they in turn told Dolph Winkler. Dolph went to tell the Parkers, Bill's dad Dave, living six miles east, and brothers Bud, Dink, and Ope. Ope was in El Paso at the time; he and Una Worthington had gone there to be married and were on their wedding trip. Bud and Dink went to Bill's and joined the posse of men on horseback. About forty men in all had gathered, including Jim Bennett; Oliver Olds; Bud and Dink Parker; Bob Kincheloe; Pat McCulloch; Jess Cook; Bruce, Doyle, and Roy Woods; John Parks; "Hammer" Livingston; Barney Parker; A. Gruell; Bob Akins; Joe Yarborough; Alec Burtrong; Blondie Evans; Bill Adams; and Ben Robertson (the Diamond A manager at that time), who was put in charge. Some of the other men were George Godfrey, Alf Yarborough, Frank Nations, Charlie and Bill Eddleman, Leo McKinney, Eck Upshaw, Lem Spilsbury, Elmer Turner, John Curry, Bill Townsend, Fred Sanford, Wilbur Stevens, Del Krebaum (father of Alice), Burt Rhodes, Slim Sims, Leonard Bean, Walter Maloney, Shad Hobbs, and Bob Caylor. The list may not be complete since Bob Kincheloe, George Godfrey, and two Woods boys, Bruce and Roy, are the only men of this posse still known to be living, and they have been unable to complete the list from memory.

ROY WOODS and his brother Bruce reached Bill and Alice's about 10 o'clock on the morning the bodies were found. Everybody believed that the couple had been murdered by horse thieves, who had taken a big bunch and headed for the line, so the men gathered at High Lonesome with the intention of cutting the thieves back at the border, getting horses and murderers at the same time. Roy Woods and Bob Kincheloe were sent to Fitzpatrick, another Diamond A camp, with a message, so were separated from the main posse. On the way back to the main bunch, Roy dropped by home (the XT outfit) to change horses.

While changing horses his brother Bruce also rode in and told him they had rounded up Parker's pasture and found only two horses missing, one grey, and one a dark brown (Bill and Alice's pet saddle horses). Their saddles and guns were also missing. Fred Sanford had seen a man and a woman ride through his corral and water their horses the night before—one a grey horse and the other dark—so now the men suspected it was Andreas and his wife they were after. Within a few more hours, they were at the Gray Ranch on their way to crossing into Old Mexico at the Lang.

The posse had checked the Mexican's movements as much as was possible at Bill's and found where he had cut Bill's gunbelt down. Bill was a big man, just twenty-four years old (Alice was twenty),

*(Continued on page 64)*

Courtesy Denver Public Library Western Collection

**Above, ruins of the old Clifton House in 1954. At top, Clifton House as it once looked.**

## THE STAGE STATION — A WESTERN SYMBOL

**By Harry Kelsey**

THE STEREOTYPE of the frontier stage station, whose bill of fare was cold beans, rancid meat, and sulphurous coffee, was not universally true, at least not on the Colorado-New Mexico border. In the years just after the Civil War, two enterprising men built stage stations there which soon gained a reputation for their fine cuisine and comfortable accommodations.

One of these was the Foster Hotel and Stage Station whose remarkably well preserved ruins still stand on the south bank of the Apishapa River near Aguilar, Colorado. James A. Foster, who was either a captain, a lieutenant, or a corporal in the Confederate Army—his tombstone says corporal, but he claimed the higher ranks in later years—began to operate the hewn-log station in the late sixties. Within a short time he built the great adobe building where "the best dinner between Pueblo and Trinidad" was served.

Foster never forgot his Confederate service. He considered the Apishapa an extension of the Mason-Dixon line, and the Confederate flag was regularly seen at the Foster place.

After the Denver and Rio Grande Western Railroad pushed its tracks south to El Morro, the stage line was abandoned and the Fosters converted their hotel to a sanitarium. When Foster died at the turn of the century, the hotel was purchased by the DuPont Powder Company and served for years as the home of the plant superintendent. Now the place is abandoned, and the walls of the old Foster Hotel and Stage Station are beginning to melt back into the earth. Strangely enough, the original stage house still stands at the rear of the great adobe ruin, its logs still as sound as they were a century ago.

A FEW foundation stones and some crumbling adobe bricks are all that remain today of Tom Stockton's famous Clifton House, south of Raton, New Mexico. The Stockton place, like Foster's, was a station on the Barlow and Sanderson Stage Line, but it stood on the other side of Raton Pass. For a dozen years, until the tracks of the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railroad reached its back door in 1879, the Clifton House was the leading hostelry of the region. A reporter for the Trinidad *Daily News* described it this way:

"The building is a large structure, three stories high, containing offices, barrooms, bedrooms, parlors, kitchen, closets, and in fact everything pertaining to a first-class house in the days of stage coaches as the only means of travel. There is a portico from each story extending along the entire front and halfway on each side of the building. One reaches the second story by means of massive stone steps, which, from six years [twelve years] constant use, have been worn until they remind one of the stone steps in front of Independence Hall. We have been informed by Mr. Thos. Stockton, the gentleman who built the house, that the structure cost, all complete, $40,000. Mr. S. says that it was no unusual thing for him to take in

# Old Days!

$1,500 in one day during these times. . . . In the dining room . . . [is] the motto of 'God bless our home' worked in evergreen and extending entirely across the room. Whether this motto was there when the house was used as a hotel, we are unable to say, but it is something extraordinary to find such a motto in the principal room of a New Mexico public house even now."

Only a fragment of adobe wall remains to mark the site of the Clifton House. The Foster Hotel has fared somewhat better through the years; the gaunt windowless buildings and the tiny, pathetic cemetery still guard the dusty banks of the Apishapa.

## A GRAVE ON BULL CREEK

By Dorothy A. Dennis

WHEN MY HUSBAND and I moved to Borden County, Texas in 1942, we purchased a ranch through which historic Bull Creek runs. This creek was known as Silver Creek prior to the buffalo hunting days. In the 1870s and 1880s, Charley Hart, an early-day buffalo hunter had renamed the creek in honor of the bull buffalo that favored its banks. Bull Creek heads up in the Slaughter Ranch (Lazy S) in Garza County, winds and twists through Borden County and finally empties into Lake Thomas. When it rains, Bull Creek becomes a wild, raging torrent, running out of banks for miles, tearing down water gaps and fences in its rush.

In looking over our new ranch in 1942, we found a grave on the banks of Bull Creek. It is in an isolated spot—lonely and hard to reach even with a pickup. The area is flat but there were old posts set at four corners with barbed wire encircling them. There was no marker or stone and we thought if we could find who was buried there we would add a headstone. The grave is still surrounded by the original posts and wire.

We began the quest to find out who occupied the grave—a quest that was to last ten years! We talked to every old-timer we could think of and each seemed surprised to know that someone was buried in that particular spot. We began to despair of ever finding anyone who might give us information until one Sunday our questing ended unexpectedly.

After church in Gail we were talking to J. H. Beal when he asked, "Bert, have you ever found a grave on your place? I know that it is on the banks of Bull Creek and I have wanted to tell you the story behind it." Here follows the strange tale:

In the late 1880s, J. H. Beal's father, H. D. Beal, along with a rancher friend, was riding through the country looking for strays when both men spied a makeshift tent pitched on the banks of Bull Creek. Believing they were going to meet some new settlers, they rode over. They received no answer to shouted "Hellos" so they got off their horses to investigate. To their horror they found three dead men—all had been shot and cards were scattered over the ground inside the tent. The ranchers had never seen the three victims before and there was no identification.

They rode into Gail and inquired about the men. No one knew them or had ever seen them! The ranchers gathered together the necessary equipment, rode back to the lonely spot and buried all three men in one grave. They put up four posts and barbed wire.

No one has ever found out the names of these men—nor has anyone ever found out how they met their death. Certainly they had been shot—but how had it happened? Could there have been a fourth man? Had they been playing for high stakes, an argument ensued and the fourth shot the other three? Is it possible that the three had shot one another? There may have been a band of marauders riding through the country who killed them! Whatever the assumption, we probably will never know the answer. Their names, their stories and their lives all ended that day in the late 1880s when they had stopped and pitched a ragged tent on Bull Creek.

## CANADIAN WEATHER

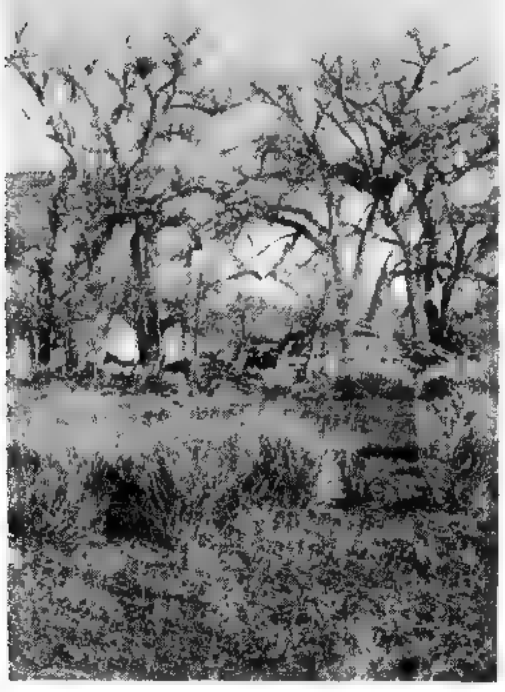
By Vern Parslow

Courtesy The Calgary Livestock Market Journal

I WAS BORN and raised in Calgary and I have been through some very cold weather. I can recall seeing a thermometer on the gas company's office registering 51 below zero. That is a very low temperature for anyone to experience, though you may be what is called "dressed for the occasion." However it was not that type of cold in effect when I had the coldest drive in my life. You can believe or not but this event took place in the middle of July 1903.

*(Continued on page 58)*

**Below, what was left of the Foster Stage Station in 1965. The original log building can be seen in the center foreground. The house on the right was the adobe hotel and stage station.**



**Grave on the banks of Bull Creek as it looks today.**

## 1874—Year of the Grasshopper

*(Continued from page 31)*

Food halfway to the mouth fell back upon the plate. Without speaking the whole family passed outside. Sharp spats in the face, insects alighted on the shoulders, in the hair, scratchy rustlings on the roofs, disgusted brushing of men's beards, the frightened whimper of a child, 'Are they going to eat us up?' Turkeys gobbling the living manna as fast as their snaky heads could dart from side to side; overhead, the sun, dimmed like the beginning of an eclipse, glinted on silvery wings as far as eyes could pierce; leaves of shade trees, blades of grass and weedstems bending with the weight of clinging inch-long horrors; a faint sickening stench of their excrement; the afternoon breeze clogged with the drift of the descending creatures. . . .

"Water troughs and loosely covered wells were foul with drowned hoppers. Neighbors passing spoke of strange happenings. A young wife awaiting her first baby, in the absence of her husband . . . had gone insane from fright, 'all alone in that sun-baked shanty on the bald prairie.' Eggs and milk tasted of the hoppers and cows were drying up, somebody said. . . ."

MOST of the victims did not sit back and wait to be eaten up but generally their effort to fight the insects were in vain. Kerosene was used as an insecticide and sticks and boards were used as flails. The hoppers were raked up into piles by some, kerosene poured over them, and the piles ignited. This eliminated great numbers of hoppers but there were simply too many for the beleagured farmers. Some settlers began plowing and harrowing their naked corn fields, exposing newly laid grasshopper eggs to the sun. This apparently was effective for in areas where it was not done, grasshopper eggs hatched the following spring.

Many pioneers were so appalled at the prospect of a barren winter that they sacrificed their homesteads and emigrated once again. Some of these were worse off than if they had stayed for they had so little money. They merely exchanged one location for another in which to live in poverty. Yet, many had little hope; they were hungry and they saw no way open to even a limited kind of prosperity.

To combat the destitution in western Kansas, Gov. Thomas Osborn called a special session of the legislature. An act was passed which authorized counties to issue bonds for local relief but aid was not sufficient to completely ease the situation. As a result, the governor called on the people of the nation to help. The generosity of Americans was great and they responded individually and through a State Central Relief Committee. Thousands of dollars were sent into Kansas and also carloads of supplies which the railroads hauled free. The federal government contributed aid by supplying army clothing and $75,000 worth of army rations. The Relief Committee spent several thousand dollars on seed corn and wheat which was distributed to western Kansas farmers. Those with courage were on their way back.

Governor Osborn reported in 1875: "As our prosperity had been unparalleled so likewise was the disaster in waiting for us. The grasshoppers came, and in a single day the crop upon which our people chiefly rely was almost totally destroyed. . . . In the destruction of the corn crop the state has suffered an affliction the extent of which cannot now be fully comprehended, and to repair which will require exemplary patience and persevering industry. The brave hearts and strong arms of our people will, however, in time, overcome the severity of the disaster and in so far as it affects the state generally, to that remedy we can safely entrust it."

In Nebraska and Dakota Territory collections were taken up in behalf of those who were left destitute and a Nebraska state relief society was formed to collect supplies and distribute them. Much of the relief depended on helpful neighbors but the federal government contributed bacon, lard and corn meal. Sympathetic Easterners also donated clothing and the Nebraska legislature voted a bond issue to provide seed for spring planting. In the Grand Island community those who could afford it raised money to buy seed and it was said that all of the stricken farmers who got seed in the form of a loan eventually repaid in full. Obviously, many of those who survived the summer of 1874 did so because of the storied American pioneer spirit of cooperation.

The grasshoppers did come again in 1875 but they came in lesser numbers and they did not eat with the voraciousness of the year before. There was no disaster in 1875 and those settlers who had determined to stay found themselves enjoying the beginnings of a new prosperity. Crops once again were good in most areas—so good that one Kansan wrote on August 6, 1875: "Vegetation rank and luxuriant in Kansas. The hoppers cultivated and manured the land, after the manner of Darwin's earth worms."

THE GRASSHOPPER year did lead to a geographical name change in Kansas. Grasshopper Falls (so named because the Delaware River had been called the Grasshopper originally) was one of the state's first settlements but its residents decided that they would prefer a less onerous name. Valley Falls was the new choice and the local editor wrote:

"The sentiment, so far as we can learn, is unanimous for a change, and the entire state is interested in having the false impression that this valley is the native breeding ground of the pestiferous redleg, removed, so far as a change of name will remove it."

The tall tales, mentioned before, began to grow taller once the threat of grasshoppers had diminished. The Western sense of humor, seldom down and out for very long, rose to new heights making fun of adversity. There were stories circulated that grasshoppers had eaten hoofs off horses and cattle, and pigs had their noses devoured. The whole business had been so fantastic, however, that sometimes it was difficult to separate fact from fiction.

This story widely circulated in 1875 came from whole cloth. The editor of the Leavenworth, Kansas *Daily Times* credited it to a gentleman just returned from southeastern Kansas who was inclined to think that many of the crimes attributed to the James boys could be traced to the "more hardened and dissolute grasshopper," many of whom were "arming with shotguns and organizing a sort of home guard for offensive and defensive purposes."

Here is the story: "A few weeks ago, a woman dug up a panful of dirt in which to plant some flower seeds. She put the pan under the stove, and went out to see a neighbor. Upon her return, after an hour's absence, she found seven thousand bushels of grasshoppers generated by the heat, literally eating her out of house and home. They first attacked the green shades on the windows, and then a green painted dust pan. A green Irish servant girl, asleep in one of the rooms, was the next victim, and not a vestige of her was left. The stove and stovepipe followed, and then the house was torn down so they could get at the chimney. Boards, joists, beams, plastering, clothing, nails, hinges, door knobs, plates, tinware, everything, in fact, the house contained was eaten up, and when she arrived within a mile of the place, she saw two of the largest hoppers sitting up on end, and playing mumble-peg with the carving knife, to see which should have the cellar.

"The way the matter leaked out was on a suit brought against the insurance company, which refused to pay the policy, on the ground that the building was not destroyed by fire; but the court rendered a verdict for the plaintiff, as she had proven that the grasshoppers were generated by the fire in the stove."

There were other stories—they went on and on—just as there were stories about blizzards and floods and bumper crops. They were a part of the settling process and they made people forget some of the things they had endured. The same kind of folklore manifested itself in the grim years of the 1930s when much of the same area of the Plains again experienced drought and grasshoppers. The farmer of the "Dirty Thirties" did have an advantage over his grandfather so far as insects were concerned because commercial insecticides had been developed. But he still could make light of the grasshopper, and thousands of postcards showing grasshoppers pulling wagons or occupying an entire railroad flatcar went through the U. S. mails.

In the 1870s the grasshoppers went away and so did the Indian and the buffalo. The ever recurring cycles of boom and bust continued and the Westerner made some money between 1875 and 1887. In the latter year he again suffered greatly but then it was not grasshoppers that did him in but a plague of farm mortgages, inflated land values and the like. Only once did he really get wiped out by the now-fabled insect invasion.



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**This may prove that a brave girl is equal to a cowardly intruder—anywhere, anytime**

# THE PROWLER WITH THE BIG FOOT

By BERTHA G. COCKBURN

Photos Courtesy Author

IT WAS November 1911, and all the men in our neighborhood had gone on a hunt up the North Concho River, for they had heard that deer were plentiful up there, as well as other game.

Our ranch was located two miles from Knickerbocker, a very small town southeast of San Angelo, Texas. We were the last place on the irrigation ditch.

Papa had never been away from home at night since Mama died, but he had been pressured to join the party of men because he had the only well-trained hounds in the section, and he and my brother had gone along, taking all six of our hounds with them. They were to be gone three days.

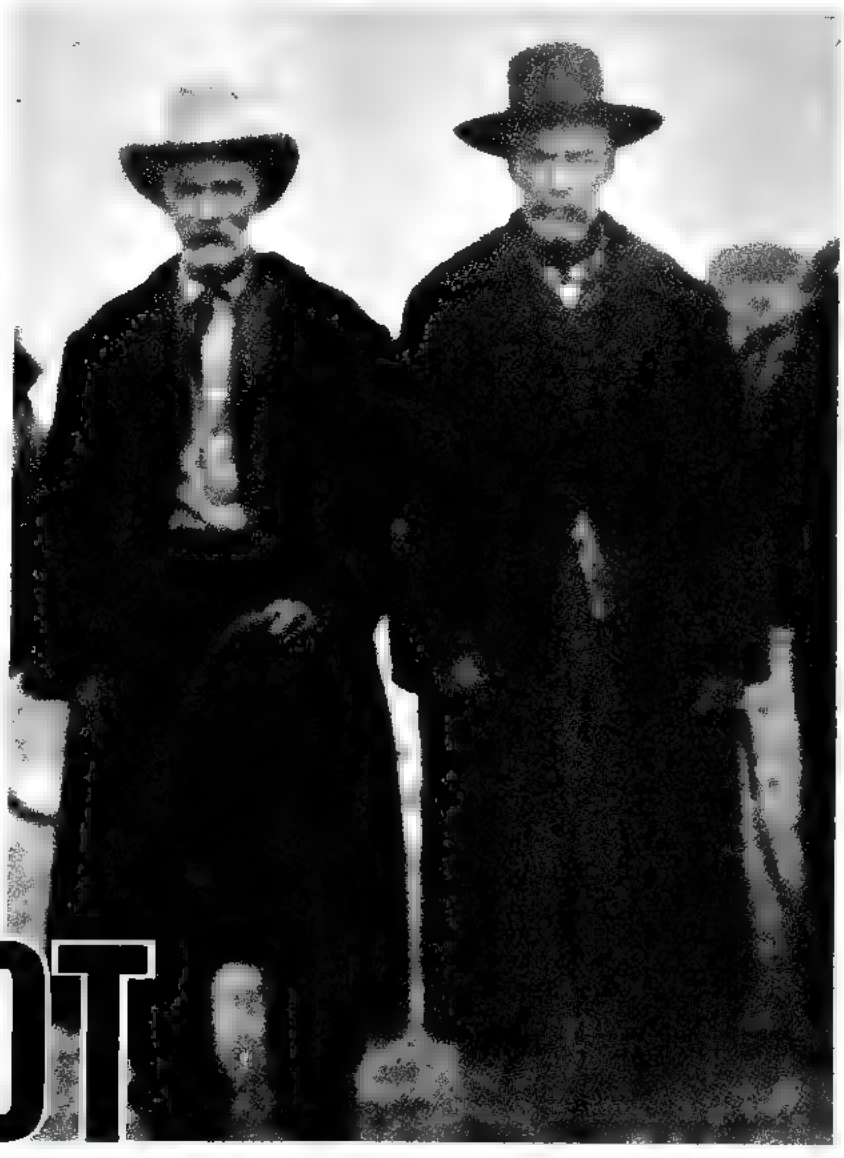
We four girls were alone for the first time in all our lives, but we were not afraid. No one had ever been known to molest a woman in that section of Texas, where everyone was well known to everyone else. Besides, there were no men left except our nearest neighbor, Mr. Pierce. He was past middle age, with gray all through his red hair, and always complaining of rheumatism.

Papa had taught me to use all our guns. I was a good shot with all of them except the shotgun, which kicked too much for me to enjoy, but it was now the only gun the men had left.

My three younger sisters, Roberta twelve, Gladys eight, and Hazel five, begged me to take them to the neighbor's to play with the Pierce girls till bedtime, for the weather was unseasonably warm. I took them and stayed till almost ten o'clock. The children played in the moonlight, while I sat on the edge of the porch and talked to Mr. Pierce and his wife. She was a small, withered woman, very pleasant and friendly, while her husband was a very large man, not fat but big boned, usually not very affable, but on this night he was both friendly and talkative. As I sat there he complained frequently of his rheumatism, saying it was in his feet and he was hardly able to freight anymore. I could not help noticing that he had unusually big feet.

He had freighted for a living for a long while and was home only part of the time. For a moment I wondered why his feet hurting him should prevent his freighting, then I remembered he hauled a great amount of hundred-pound sacks of feed for the local store which served a large ranch area. He never visited or neighbored with anyone, but this night he seemed glad to see us.

WE HAD LEFT no light burning in our house, nor had we even locked the door. The truth was, the door had no good lock on it, for locks were so rarely needed in those days that almost no ranch house had a lock on the door. When we reached home we went inside unhesitatingly, being unafraid of anything, and I lighted the lamp on the dresser in Papa's room. Our bedroom was back of his, and the dining room was on the other side, but we did not so much as glance at the rest of the six-room house, but went to bed at once. For some reason that I did not understand, I decided that I should sleep in Papa's bed. I closed the big front door, which was a few feet across from the head of Papa's bed, blew out the lamp and fell



**Left to right: R. F. "Dick" Cockburn and his brother J. J. "Jeff" Cockburn, home from a fox hunt in the hills south of Knickerbocker, Texas, 1912. It was Jeff Cockburn's daughters who were awakened by the prowler.**

asleep as soon as I was in bed.

It had been warm and clear when we went to bed, so that it was a shock to be awakened in the middle of the night by rain blowing in my face. At first I couldn't remember where I was, then it came to me. I was in Papa's bed, and someone had opened the door, for it never could come open of itself.

I turned my face toward the rain and strained my eyes to see, but it was black dark, and for a moment I could make out nothing. Then, as my eyes adjusted to the darkness, I saw a figure in the doorway, seemingly stooped over. The big door was fully open, but I wasn't

Left to right: Hazel, Gladys and Bertha Cockburn in 1916.

alarmed. I thought it was Roberta, stooped over tying her shoe.

"Roberta," I asked drowsily, "what are you doing there? Come on in and shut the door. The rain is blowing in my face." There was no answer, nor did the figure move at all. Suddenly I came wide awake, alarmed, for it came to me that even if my sister was not afraid of the dark she still would have lit the lamp. Moreover, she had no reason to go out in the rain in the middle of the night that I knew of. I sat up in bed, tense.

"Roberta," I said sharply, my voice loud, "is that you in the door? If it is, come in and shut the door." I could see enough in the darkness now to tell the door was wide open and the figure in it was almost certainly a man squatted on his haunches.

Roberta had a quick, alert mind, and it did not fail her in this emergency. "No," she yelled from the other room, "it's not me in the door. Grab the shotgun quick." I sprang to my feet in bed and reached for the double-barreled shotgun, still in its rack above the headboard. Had the prowler only known it, I was at his mercy during the time it took me to get the heavy gun from its rack. He probably had in mind that the gun was near to my hand, for when I turned with the gun in my hand the prowler had gone. I came down off the bed holding the shotgun just as Roberta ran into the room.

"Light the lamp fast," I called to her. "Maybe we can get him yet." In a moment she had the lamp burning, and grabbed it from the dresser to follow me out on the porch where we began to search for muddy tracks. The drizzle of rain had already wet the ground but we found nothing on the south end of the porch. The porch was in the ell of the house, and the south gate was at the front, a few yards beyond.

We turned back to the other side of the porch, which led westward to the gate toward our corrals and big barn. Here we had better luck, for muddy tracks led from the west side to the door, but none was plain enough to give us any idea of the prowler's size, or person. Then, near the edge of the porch we found a muddy footprint, very clear and plain on the gray, painted porch floor, and it was enormous in size. We stared at the giant print of a bare foot, horrified. For the first time I realized what danger we might still be in, standing outside with the lamplight outlining us clearly.

Now our little sisters were crowding out to see the muddy footprint which had so shocked us. I shooed them back inside the house, keeping the barrels of the shotgun turned toward the west gate from which the prowler had come. Then Roberta set the lamp down, at my orders, and took the one by twelve plank standing against the wall, with which Papa had meant to make a shelf, and laid it carefully over the big muddy track. After that we went inside, closed the door and went back to bed.

I LEFT the lamp burning, but there was no more sleep for me. I lay the rest of the night trying to think of who the prowler might have been and what he had been doing there. Papa was a rancher-farmer who often had a large group of Mexicans on his payroll, as well as our regular hands, yet he had never kept cash on the place but always paid by check. This was well known, so it could not have been money he had wanted. Nor were there any other valuables.

The more I thought about it the more certain I became that Roberta's fearless cry, "Grab the shotgun quick," had saved my life and the lives of my sisters as well.

I thought of old man Pierce, whose feet resembled the prowler's in size, but he had never been known to look at any woman other than his wife, though she was years older than he, and it was hard to believe this of him. Would a man go out in the cold rain barefoot who had rheumatism in his feet?

The following night we made a barricade of tin cans all around the porch, and strung a baling wire low to trip anyone who might come visiting again. It looked ridiculous, but when I lifted the plank and looked at the muddy footprint I knew it was sensible to have something to warn us.

Nothing happened, however, and I slept a little, with the loaded shotgun beside my bed where I could touch it. We stayed inside all the dreary rain-soaked day and dreaded the coming of night again, but just before dark Papa and the others came in with our six hounds. Were we glad to see them!

When they began to laugh at our barricade I lifted the plank and showed Papa the big muddy track, still very clear and plain. It shocked and worried him, but there was nothing he could do to learn the prowler's identity for the rain had grown heavier and had washed away all trace of the man's tracks where he left the yard.

The following day I went over to Mr. and Mrs. Pierce's house and told them all about the prowler. The old man was eating his lunch. He never said one word, only grunted and looked at me searchingly for a moment, then dropped his eyes and stolidly ate his meal. His wife said, "My goodness," once, looked at her husband, then at me, and when the silence grew noticeable, I got up and went home.

My father did not go near him. Papa was a highly respected man, known far and near as a man who got along with his neighbors—but he was very high tempered. I'm sure that he did not go talk to Pierce because Papa was afraid he would learn it really was he who came, and he did not want to kill a man who did not succeed in harming us. Mr. Pierce's wife left him a few months after this happening. Both of them are dead now but I have deliberately changed the family name.

We were never to learn the identity of the prowler, but not ever again would Papa leave his girls alone. And to this day I feel frustrated not to know the identity of the man who came barefoot to our home on a rainy night when we girls were alone and helpless—or so he had thought.



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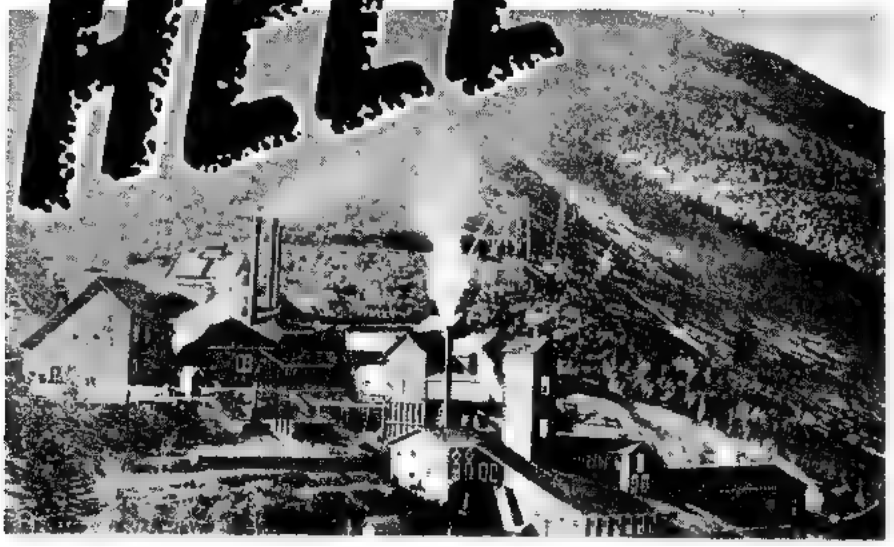


By GEORGE A. THOMPSON

Photos Courtesy Author

***Subterranean horror, invisible and deadly, raced through the mining shafts to overtake the men it had marked for its own***

**The Daly-West Mine where the terrible explosion occurred in 1902.**

THIRTY-FOUR silver miners found their hell 1,200 feet underground on a black midnight in 1902. At 11:20 p.m. on July 15, 1902, several unusual occurrences at Park City, Utah's Daly-West Mine, hinted at the terrible tragedy taking place in the depths below.

Shift boss Hennessy was near the shaft when he heard a muffled report, but upon listening closely for several minutes and hearing nothing further he returned to his work. At the same time hoisting engineer Chet Barker felt a sudden tremor rock the engine room and he stopped the hoist to see what was wrong. Not finding anything unusual he brought the cage slowly to the surface and discovered pieces of broken mine timber on it. Just then he received a signal to hoist a miner named Rooker from the 900′ level. When Rooker arrived at the surface he told Barker and Hennessy that a giant explosion had ripped through the mine somewhere below the 900′ level.

With Hennessy and another miner named Worthington, Rooker was lowered back down the shaft, sounding a warning to the workers as he passed each level. At 1,400′ the body of Elias Nelson was found near the shaft. The searchers couldn't tell what had killed him or if others farther back on that level were dead also so the three men returned to the 900′ level to organize a rescue party.

When they returned to the 1,400′ level with three additional volunteers they found the bodies of John Devlin and Jack Featherstone but before they could complete their search, Hennessy was overcome by gas. They were forced to retreat back to the 900′ level. When Hennessy revived he was informed that three more bodies had been found and that the rescue party had been forced to leave Richard Dillon, one of the volunteers, when he fell unconscious. An attempt was made to get Dillon out but the rescuers became so sick from fumes they were barely able to get back to the fresher air near the shaft.

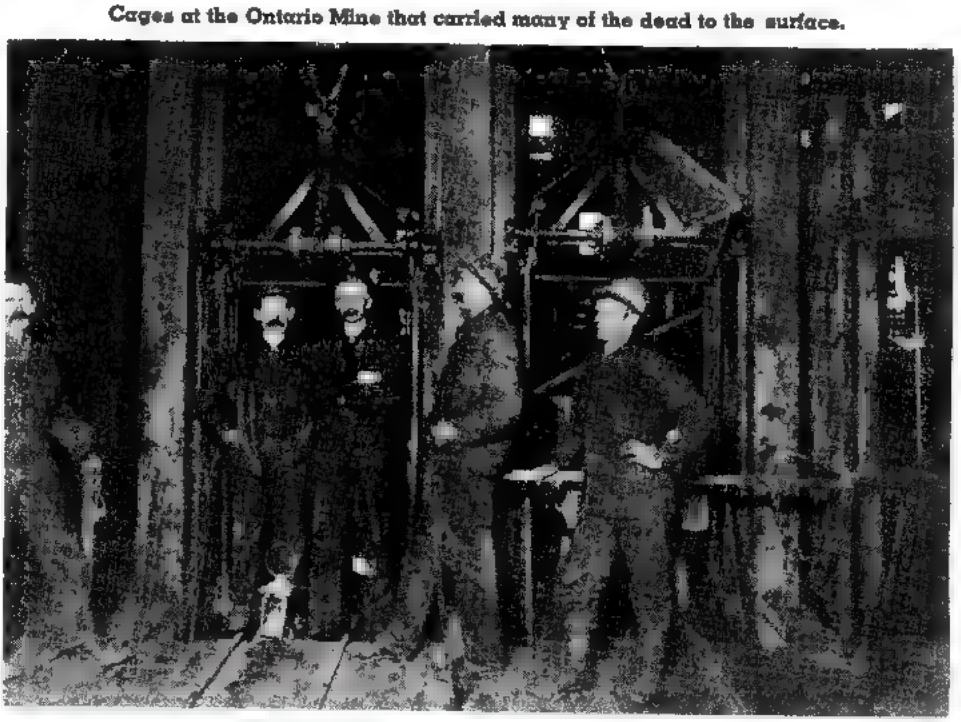
By then more bodies were being discovered on other levels and engineer Barker was kept busy hoisting dead miners and sick rescuers to the surface. All through the black night and the dismal day which followed, mine foreman Nimmo directed the grisly search while anxious mothers, wives, and friends kept a lonely vigil at the portal of the shaft.

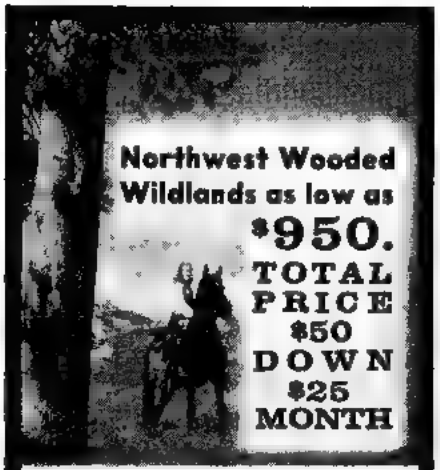
By mid-morning fumes deep in the pit of death had become so overpowering that several searchers were missing and foreman Nimmo announced he would not let the cage be lowered again. At this decision pleas from friends and families of the missing miners became so impassioned that finally he yielded to them and joined in the search once more. An eternity passed for those waiting on the surface until the cage came up again, this time with the bodies of Richard Dillon and John McLaughlin, members of the first search party to enter the mine.

Several of the miners thought that George Richardson had gone into the mine with one of the rescue parties but

*(Continued on page 68)*

**Cages at the Ontario Mine that carried many of the dead to the surface.**



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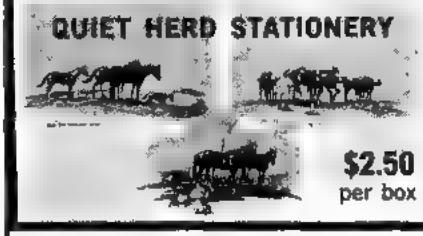

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## Ancient Salt Trails

*(Continued from page 29)*

loaded burros were untangled, four of them lay dead of broken necks.

A SECOND snowstorm cost the train another thirty-six-hour delay waiting it out. At Houck, when the skies cleared, two feet of snow covered the ground. The bright sun glazed it over and I began to wonder about the salt train. It was long overdue and the snow had likely been heavier up in the mountains. Borrowing a Navajo's horse one morning I rode out onto the nearby timbered mesa.

Three miles away I found the salt train just barely moving. The Hopis had wrapped their feet in pieces of blankets as protection against freezing. The strongest men took turns at the laborious task of breaking trail through the frozen snow crust. All of them were just about worn out. The burros neared the point of exhaustion, stopping often to bunch together.

On reaching a clearing the train was forced to stop and make camp. They had run out of all food two days before. Returning to the trading post I packed them provisions on two more borrowed ponies. During my absence from the train several Navajos had come along and had returned to their hogans to butcher two sheep for which the Hopis promised salt.

By blazing fires that night, though fed and warmed, the men and boys grew glum and very jittery over their recent bad luck. Deep sorrow pervaded them whenever they remembered the boy left behind. Most of the night they chanted and said prayers for him, and for their own welfare in the days immediately ahead. One of their saddest duties now was that, before reaching the dead boy's village, they must send a delegation ahead to deliver the tragic news. That night they were bolstered in spirit only in the belief that they were almost out of the snow. But in this they were wrong.

I had learned from Navajos that the snow cover reached above the railroad tracks north through a red valley. The salt train faced fifteen more miles of ice and snow, with the temperature down around zero even at mid-day.

"I don't think them jacks make it," Pole said to me. "Sore foots."

Houck trading post had another store twelve miles north at Pine Springs. The freight road to it ran half-way through the red valley. Navajo wagons had been coming down it between storms, keeping it open. Our freighting truck could get through. The post owner was a good fellow. When approached on the matter he said to go ahead and try hauling the Hopis' panniers of salt as far as possible. Pole greeted the plan with delight.

While I drove the truck, Hopis loaded and unloaded the cargo. In two places, climbing up ridges both times, we had to shovel ice and snow to get traction for the wheels. But we got through to where the road turned out of the valley for Pine Springs. The first group remained there to watch the load while I made four trips.

During the hauling the unladen burros were herded up the road. Along the way flint cowhides were begged from Navajos who had settled on farms in the lower end of the valley. When soaked in hot water they became pliable enough to be cut into pouches to go on the sore-footed burros. This kind of shoe served very adequately and I have seen it employed on other animals.

Another storm was building up, threatening to drop any time from a very close sky. Instead of recuperating longer, the Hopis decided to get on to their village. I had packed enough food to see them through, and for this they had traded block salt which the post could sell to Navajo stockmen.

As I stood watching them go across the brilliantly white landscape, Pole was the last in line. The turkey-red silk neckerchief around his head, the knot tied above his left ear, shone bright when the sun pierced the cloudy sky.

This was his last trip with the salt trains. Indeed, that year the heyday for them was to pass. Thereafter the expeditions dwindled fast as the young Hopis acquired trucks. They hauled the salt quickly and more cheaply until they, too, ended their long journeys to Zuni Lake. The educated tribesmen taking over the villages preferred the white man's product.

Today little salt is procured from any of the ancient beds. The small amount obtained is used for stock and ceremonial purposes only.

## Gunsight—On Target

*(Continued from page 15)*

before descending into Panamint Valley.

Somewhere between the upper end of Harrisburg Flat, enclosing Skidoo, and the series of small springs near Pinto Peak, look for an ancient mesquite clump or greasewood bush. There, buried or shifted by cloudbursts, may be the long lost Gunsight lode and the cache of Jayhawker gold coins.

Close at hand, perhaps to spur you on or at least reward you historically, you'll see the great boulder carved wtih ancient Indian petroglyphs and inscriptions dating back several decades. Among these is the "WBR 1849" of William B. Rood, Jayhawker witness to the silver and gold which was not worth its weight to carry out on the tragic trek from the valley whose name is Death.

# TRAILIN' DOWN TO NEBRASKA

By FRED ROOT

Illustrated by Al Martin Napoletano

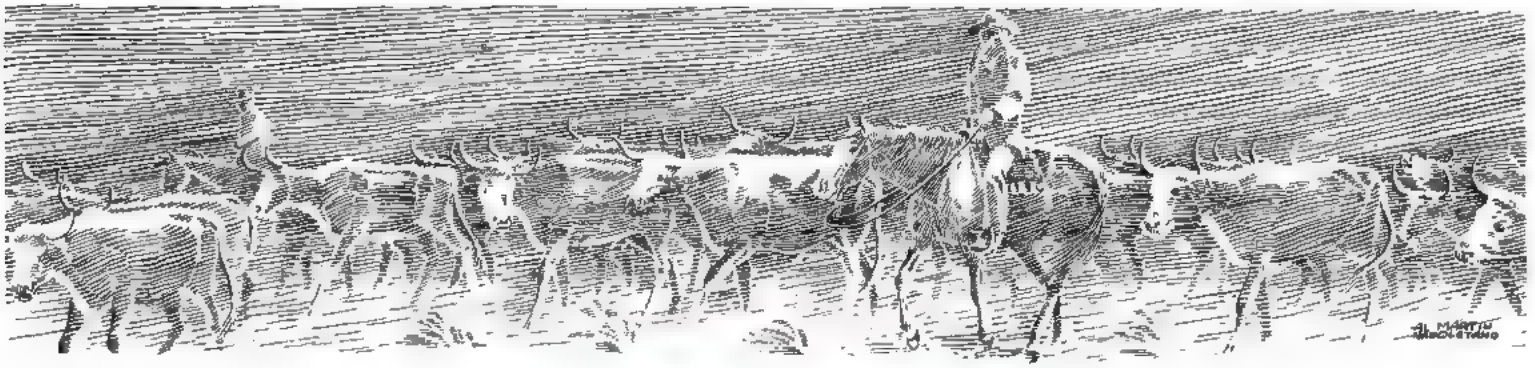
**When Fred's friend took a notion that the bawl of a calf would make prettier music than the whistle of a train, there wasn't anything to do but help him find out . . .**

HARRY ARMSTRONG, a railroad engineer with a run out of Huron, South Dakota, decided to quit and start ranching. He bought out an old estate, no real estate included except a lease. This must have been about 1908. He got about 100 head of horses and about 100 cattle.

The outfit was badly grazed out and the water situation was not good, so he took a look around and found a location that he liked in the sandhills area south of Cody, Nebraska. When he got back, he came over to see me. I knew where he lived; had probably seen him a time or two but doubt I had ever spoken to him.

He told me he wanted a man to go with him to his new location, but that he had never had any experience in moving a bunch of stock a long distance. (A ramrod, in other words.) He wanted to take household goods and family; said he could handle a four-horse team, that his wife could cook, that his twelve-year-old boy could ride at least part-time, and his wife would drive the buckboard. I agreed to take on the job, calling his attention to the lateness of the season. We couldn't get started before November 5 at best.

*(Continued on page 65)*



## Fabulous Quarter Horse: Steel Dust

*(Continued from page 13)*

blacksmith, he still followed the races. Sometimes he would travel as far as Waco or Georgetown for a three-day meet.

Shiloh went to his death as gallantly as any mustang stallion that ever roamed the Texas plains. Jack Batchler's son Henry recalled that Shiloh lived to be thirty, which would put his death about 1874. A sister of Henry, Mary Elizabeth, who married Tom Farrar, recalled that she was in her teens when Shiloh died. That would put the date between 1869 and 1875.

To his final hour, Shiloh was a proud stallion, with all of the spirit that made him an outstanding sprinter and sire. One day, when Jack Batchler was away from his Bear Creek home, Shiloh managed to enter the corral of another stallion and engaged him in a death battle. But Shiloh's thirty years made him too old for such an encounter. He fought with the highest equine courage until Mrs. Batchler separated the duelists. The separation came too late to save Shiloh. He had burst a blood vessel, and he soon expired. The Batchlers buried him in a pasture near their home.

It would be gratifying to be able to give as definite and undisputed an account of the last days of Steel Dust. But the fog of conflicting legends which obscures much of the life of this fabulous stallion is especially thick over his final years. Bob Denhardt quoted an unnamed great-grandson of Thomas McKee Ellis who said that Steel Dust died in 1864 and was buried on Mid Perry's farm. Two of Jones Greene's grandchildren, Oscar H. Greene and Mrs. Maud Greene Mitchell, both of Lancaster, believed that Mid Perry owned the bay stallion until the latter's death and that his bones lie somewhere near Ten Mile Creek.

Yet other versions are widely divergent. Hard as it is to believe that anyone in the Perry or Greene families would part with Steel Dust, some accounts say that one of them did so. Henry Pangburn, citing Lon Greene, a son of Jones Greene, wrote in 1941 that Lon Greene had owned Steel Dust for several years. Steel Dust, in his old age, Pangburn added, was sold to someone in southwestern Texas. Sam E. Curry of Plainview, a grandson of Jones Greene, wrote in 1948 that his grandmother, widowed late in 1864, had sold Steel Dust for a thousand dollars to a man who lived near Hillsboro and that the blind stallion had lived seven or eight years after that.

A more specific account came in 1939 from H. H. (Bud) Raburn. Interviewed by Frank W. Austin, he said that his father, Bill Raburn, had bought Steel Dust for four or five hundred dollars just before the close of the Civil War. At that time, Bill Raburn lived in Bell County. Ten months later, his son said, he moved to Stodger Bend in Hood County. A later move took the family to Peebler Valley, in the same county.

Bud Raburn, born in 1861, said that he had cut every finger of his left hand in gathering green corn for old Steel Dust. When the blind stallion was about thirty years old, he said, his father sold him to Jim Brown. Brown was said to have taken the aged veteran to southern Texas, where he died two years later.

Thus there can be no marker for the grave of Steel Dust; but for more than a hundred years quarter horses of Steel Dust blood have been winning laurels to keep his memory green.

LONG BEFORE the cannons started booming across the South, colts of Steel Dust began making names for themselves, thus enhancing the popularity of their sire. Fifty miles north of Ten Mile Creek three young men looked for the best mounts they could find before they enlisted in the Confederate cavalry. They were Will O. Medlin, John Reynolds, and C. A. (Alex) Williams. All of them bought Steel Dust colts. Whenever they were shifted to another command, they would match their horses in quarter races. As a result, all through the war, they always had more money than they could spend.

Henry T. Batchler, one of Jack Batchler's sons, raised a fast colt, Tom Driver, by Steel Dust and out of a Shiloh mare, Mammoth. Henry believed that the best of the Steel Dust get was one of the last, Gray Alice, a mare owned by Jim Brown of Burnet County, in the hill country. Will Williams of Denton recalled that Gray Alice won matches all the way from Texas to Tennessee. She beat Gray Dick, owned by the Thomason family of Denton County, and Red Morocco, owned by Vince Hildreth, father of the well-known trainer, Sam Hildreth. Pat, another Steel Dust colt owned by Brown, was especially good at 600 yards.

Among the other well-known Steel Dust colts on Texas tracks was Traveler, also called Jack Traveler. He was owned by Lon Greene. A silver tureen won by Traveler in a race at Waxahachie in the 1870s was proudly displayed eighty years later on the mantel of the Dallas home of a grand-nephew of Lon Greene, Charles C. Pierce. Also renowned for his speed was a Steel Dust colt, Jim Brown's sorrel stallion, Rebel. Others attributed to Steel Dust were Bill Fleming, Bill Garner, Black George, John Cook, Mounts, and the mares, Alice May, Ram Cat, and Mollie.

After the war, quarter racing became even more popular on the frontier than it had been earlier. This was only natural in the range country, where being well mounted was as important for success—and even for survival—as being well

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armed. For work use in the roundups and in taking Longhorn herds up the Chisholm Trail, many of the cowmen preferred mounts of Steel Dust blood. They might sell their other horses in Kansas, along with the trail cattle, but they kept the Steel Dusts for their own use. And if some unwary Kansan, or even some Indian along the trail, suggested a short race, the cow hand with a Steel Dust mount always was ready.

All up and down the Great Plains, quarter racing became a favorite sport. Sometimes the young bloods would even arrange a match on the fringe of a religious camp meeting. The sport was especially popular in the Kansas cow towns where the Texans sold their herds.

Just north of Wichita, in plain view of the town, was a track on which ponies were matched on Saturday afternoons. On July 6, 1872, reported the *Eagle* six days later, "the race was between a Texas horse and a Wichita mare. The mare won, and it is said that more than a thousand dollars changed hands. It was estimated that more than one thousand men were present, besides five carriage loads of 'soiled doves.' So great was the rush that Main Street, for an hour or so, seemed almost deserted."

At Clyde, Kansas, a thousand dollars changed hands at a single match. But, where cash was scarce, the cowboys often bet ponies, saddles, and even articles of clothing.

As had been the case earlier in Kentucky, many riders matched their horses in village streets. At Iola, Kansas, in May, 1874, the *Neosho Valley Register* suggested: "An excellent way to fix a street is to plow a deep ditch across it. It prevents horse racing." At Ennis, Texas, not many miles south of the Batchler home on Bear Creek, an ordinance banning horse races in streets and alleys was still on the books in 1953.

Among the Plains Indians, short horse races were as popular as among the whites. Usually the contestants matched their ponies with those of other Indians and rode bareback. Buffalo robes, furs, and spare ponies were the most frequent stakes. Sometimes the Indians tried mounts against cavalry horses at the frontier army posts. More often they arranged matches at the cow camps along the Chisholm Trail. At the Red Fork of the Arkansas River in 1870, a band of Osages challenged the trail outfit of which Bill Slaughter was foreman. All afternoon the cowboys matched their horses with those of the braves, putting up two or three dollars against a handsome dressed buffalo robe.

IN 1875 the most talked-of horse in Texas was one of Steel Dust ancestry best known as the Denton mare. Her owner was Sam Bass, an orphaned youth who had come from southern Indiana to Texas, arriving in Denton County in the fall of 1870. Denton, in northern Texas, was on the frontier that marked off the farming region to the east from the ranching country to the west.

After working for a spell as a cow hand and learning to handle a rope and a six-shooter, Sam went back into the town of Denton and took a less arduous and more sociable job. This was the work of looking after the guests' horses at the Lacy House. Later he was a handy man for Sheriff William F. Egan, familiarly known at Dad Egan. Sam had nothing to do with the sheriff's official duties but did odd jobs for Egan. He chopped firewood in winter; and sometimes he went on trips to Dallas or Sherman as a freighter, since Denton had no railroad.

Sam was an ordinary-looking young fellow with black hair and careless appearance. His muscles were firm, but he didn't seem to have much energy. He had lost his boyhood illusions about the romance of life on the range, and he had no girl to take his attention. When other fellows spruced up on Sunday afternoons



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and went courting, Sam stayed at the Egan home to loaf or whittle. But not for long. By the spring of 1874 he had acquired a passion for horse racing.

Blood seemed to pulse faster through his veins when Sam went to the races. Even scrub matches on the open prairie were a tonic for his sluggish spirits. Now he had something to look forward to; he had somewhere to go on Sunday afternoons. There was a thrill in watching the sleek ponies run for the goal, a satisfaction in picking the winner. Sam liked the excitement that attended matches on the improvised track a mile north of town.

No grandstand was needed for this simple Denton track. As usual on the frontier, each spectator came on horseback and stayed in his saddle to watch the matches. When some of the onlookers came on ponies hired from livery stables, cutups found opportunity for a little fun. One of the sportive youths would snatch the reins from the hands of some unsuspecting fan and toss them over the horse's head. At the same moment, his confederate would give the livery horse a hard swat on the rump. The startled but discerning horse then would tear out for his stable in town. The rider would hang on as well as he could, trying, without success, to stop his rushing steed. Sometimes three or four of these capering livery horses could be seen raising dust at one time on the road from the racetrack to Denton.

Sam Bass liked the races so well that soon he wasn't content to remain a mere onlooker. He wanted to enter a pony of his own. Lacking the price of a good racehorse, he cast about for a partner who might have a little money to put with his. Such an associate he found in Armstrong B. Egan, usually called Army, a younger brother of the sheriff.

Together, in the fall of 1874, Army Egan and Sam bought a chestnut sorrel mare from a farmer, Mose Taylor. Mose lived in the Hilltown neighborhood, later called Little Elm, on the McKinney road in the eastern part of the county. Sam had recognized the racing possibilities of this Steel Dust mare when he happened to see her tied near the courthouse. She was a two-year-old and about fifteen hands high. Her hind left foot was white above the hoof.

Army and Sam named their sorrel mare for one of the sheriff's young daughters, Virginia. They called her Ginny or Jenny. But the sheriff was determined that no brother of his should be mixed up in horse racing. He insisted that Army sell his share and even advanced Sam the money to buy out his new partner. He let Sam keep the mare in the Egan barn, but he wasn't pleased at having his hired hand dabble in a sport that was associated with gambling and fighting. The mare, he feared, would lead Sam into bad company.

UNDISTURBED by the sheriff's frown, Sam was happy and confident in his new role. He was sure that Jenny would be a winner. When his friends saw her course down the track, they told him he had made a fortunate buy. Jenny could outrun any pony in Denton. Soon she was taking on rivals from other places. In his first race, Sam had as a jockey Luther Clark, who had worked on Randolph Paine's ranch near Pilot Knob, southwest of town. Amid excited shouts and tossed sombreros, Jenny made an easy win.

For the second race of the Bass mare, a week or two later, a young Negro rode. His real name was Charlie Tucker, but he was known as Dick Eidson because he had been working as a jockey for Reece Eidson, a prominent racing man. In this race, Jenny won even more easily. The Negro was a featherweight, and he and the mare seemed to have an affinity from the start. Sam engaged Dick as a regular jockey, and Jenny never lost a race when the skinny Negro rode her.

Soon the mare was making money for Sam, but Sheriff Egan's frown was growing darker. Egan was concerned over a story that Sam had poisoned the drinking water of a rival's horse. He didn't approve of the crowd that Sam was running with. In particular, he didn't like the looks of Henry Underwood, an older freighter who was helping Sam train the fleet-footed mare. In March 1875, Sheriff Egan told Sam he would have to sell Jenny or quit his job.

The sheriff's decision had been hastened by Sam's scrape with a racehorse owner in a neighboring county. Sam claimed there had been a foul at the start of a race, and the judges disagreed. Litigation and other troubles resulted. Dad Egan feared that the mare might lead his hired hand into other difficulties. Sam left the Egan place with only good feelings toward the sheriff and his family. He would make more money by racing than by working. Soon he would be able to repay the sheriff the $130 he still owed him.

Before long the Denton mare became the talk of sportsmen across the prairies of northern Texas. Professional racing men from surrounding counties brought their horses to take Sam's money. They trailed home with flat purses and a new respect for Jenny's speed. One man from Rockwall was especially contemptuous of the claims made for Sam's sorrel mare. But he became wiser and poorer as had the others. Sometimes Sam made as much as $500 on a single race. He guaranteed Dick $100, win or lose, and gave him as much as $300 from an unusually profitable match. Dick also made extra money as a tipster.

Not all Sam's races were so profitable. When money was scarce, he would run Jenny for other stakes—usually ponies but sometimes hats, suits, wagons, or buggies. Once he put $200 against an opponent's wagon and yoke of steers. When the loser whined over his hard luck, Sam gave him back the wagon and animals. On another occasion, Sam won a twenty-dollar suit of clothes. He seldom wore his fine suit, as he preferred his old patched pants.

As a jockey, Dick used methods of his own. Most of those who rode on the Denton track used light racing saddles, but Dick rode bareback, with only a smear of molasses on Jenny's back to help him stick to her. Jenny seemed to understand Dick's every word and movement. He

had only to pat her on the neck to stop her after she had crossed the finish line.

Sam developed a peculiar method of starting his mare at the Denton track. Believing that she could do better by starting downhill from a slight elevation, he built—with the help of Underwood and the Negro jockey—a dirt mound at the starting point. At its highest point, the elevation was two to three feet above the level of the track. Visitors still could make out a vestige of this mound on the Fry farm sixty years later. Some of his opponents objected to his use of the mound, but usually Sam could pacify them by giving their ponies the advantage of a slight lead.

As many as five or six hundred people would come to the Denton track to see Jenny run, but soon her winning became so foregone that the excitement died down. Sam hardly could find a horse to run against her. So he decided to take the mare to other tracks, with Dick as jockey. They went southward to Fort Worth, Granbury, Cleburne, and even Waco, more than a hundred miles below Denton.

Jenny won every match, and Sam triumphantly brought her back to Denton. His money slipped through his fingers, though. Generous with Dick, he also shared his gains with Henry Underwood, who was an informal manager for the mare. Gaming and drinking took what was left, though Sam usually quit the bottle while he still was able to walk in a straight line.

BACK IN DENTON, Sam matched Jenny again. Buck Tomlin brought up from the eastern part of Tarrant County a large sorrel stallion named Rattler. He and Sam had agreed to a match at Elizabethtown but later decided on Denton. Tomlin refused to race unless the Negro jockey was ruled out. Sam finally consented, confident that he would win anyway. That day the mare's rider was Harry Hayes, handy man for Scott Mayes, who had just opened a saloon and bowling alley in Denton. Harry was a capable jockey, but he didn't have Dick's knack with Jenny. To Sam's chagrin, the race went to Rattler. This was the first time that Jenny had lost. Sam and his friends were sure that Dick could have jockeyed her for a win.

Soon afterward Sam and Henry and several companions went on another racing trip, this time to the northwest. On this tour, the jockey was Johnny Hudson, a slim youngster who worked on the Brandon ranch. Jenny won on a track in Montague County, a little above Saint Jo. Then the party crossed the Red River into the Indian Territory to clean up on the Choctaws and Cherokees. At Fort Sill Sam's pony had no trouble beating the scrubby Indian ponies; but getting the ponies he had won was not so easy.

After one race, the judges declared the Denton mare had had a start that equaled her lead at the finish. Sam was willing to run the race again, several days later. He also agreed to having the length extended to 800 yards, since some of the warriors had said that his Steel Dust mare couldn't run more than 600, the


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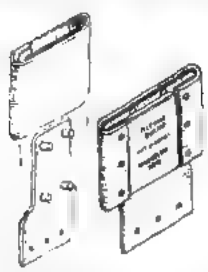

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length of the disputed race. Sam was suspicious of the Indians, though. Before the race, he told the jockey to cross the finish line and keep on riding for the Red River. The wagon and extra horses already were on the way. He and the boys would follow with any horses they won.

Jenny made a fair win, and Johnny Hudson rode her on to the river and across into Texas. Before daylight Sam and his friends showed up with the Indian ponies. The redskins again had refused to give up the stakes, but Sam and his companions had gone back after dark and helped themselves. The Bass party arrived back in Denton County late in 1875 and camped on Hickory Creek, six miles below the town.

Before long Sam and Henry and Johnny headed southwestward. Sam and his jockey wanted to continue their racing. Underwood planned to buy cattle and trail them north. After a ride of many days, Sam and his mare reached San Antonio. There Sam became acquainted with Joel Collins, a tall, dark-haired young saloonkeeper of about his own age. Joel, a reckless fellow whose parents lived on a farm northeast of Dallas, had been in the saloon business only a few months but was ready to quit. He formed a partnership with Sam for exploiting the Denton mare in the brush country.

The two worked out a scheme that was hard to beat. Collins took charge of the mare and matched her on one track after another. Meanwhile Bass set himself up as a trainer and a judge of race stock. Picking a horse he thought Jenny could outrun, he would advise the owner to match it against the mare supposedly owned by Joel. Collins would bet on Jenny and split his winnings with Bass. This scheme worked from San Antonio to the Rio Grande. On several occasions the pair even took the mare into Mexico.

Sam was able to send Sheriff Egan most of the money he owed him, but the game of fleecing Mexicans began to wear out. One wealthy turfman in San Antonio became suspicious of Sam and returned to Mexico, carrying $4,000 in currency. Sam was so disappointed that he was tempted to follow and waylay the Mexican, but the latter eluded him.

Bass was disgusted at this failure. "I believe the jig is up in this country," he told Joel Collins. He sold the Denton mare in San Antonio and joined Collins in trailing a herd of Longhorns to Kansas. From there they went to Deadwood, where they gambled away the cattle money and—to recoup their losses—began their short career as robbers of stagecoaches and trains. Their banditry helped to preserve the story of the Denton mare in legend and song. Soon after the death of Sam at Round Rock in 1878, following a gun battle with Texas Rangers and other officers, cowboys on night guard began chanting the story of his tragic life:

*Sam made a deal in race stock—*
*One called the Denton mare.*
*He matched her in scrub races*
*And took her to the fair.*

Another Steel Dust horse had etched her name in history. Others, with less attention, were doing valiant work in building a great cattle industry on the ranges of the Southwest.

IN THE 1870s Steel Dust colts began to feel the competition of Thoroughbreds, as had their ancestors in Kentucky twenty to thirty years earlier. While Sam Bass was matching his Denton mare on the quarter tracks, many turf fans in the larger Texas towns were demanding longer races. They also wanted contests in which more than two horses were entered. The quarter matches ended too quickly to suit them. So Henry Batchler and other breeders began bringing in Kentucky Thoroughbreds, then breeding their own. Some Texas towns had had longer races, even in the period of the Republic; but the quarter races had been more common.

The younger Batchler began racing long horses in 1880 and won many trophies with Jack Hardy, Maggie May, and L'Argentine. When he and others formed the Texas Thoroughbred Breeders Association in 1885, he became its first president. Batchler took his Thoroughbreds to tracks in every section of the United States and to several in Canada, winning on many of them. Finally he sold his last race horse, Black Barrier, for eight thousand dollars, and retired from the tracks.

By that time the new auto races and a law against organized gambling had put even the Thoroughbreds in eclipse in Texas. Grass grew on the Dallas track that had felt the hoofbeats of Judge Hurt, Elrod, Lena Hill, Joe Patchen, and Dan Patch. Yet during all this period quarter racing had survived in the cow country of western Texas and northern Mexico. There still were scrub matches on the open prairie, and Steel Dust colts were winning more than their share.

More than ever Steel Dust became a name to conjure with. The proud owner of a winner on a grassy track would explain, "It's that Steel Dust blood." The cowpuncher trying to sell a worn-out broomtail to some sucker from the next county would climax his sales talk with the barefaced claim, made in an awed whisper, "This nag's got Steel Dust blood."

Whether they had records or not, breeders made free with the magic Steel Dust name. As one ranchman, Frank Hastings, observed, "Almost every horse trader who hasn't recently joined the church or been rescued from backsliding will declare that his line of stock is largely Steel Dust stallions."

The more discerning horsemen usually could discount false claims and could pick out a Steel Dust mount by his appearance. This strain of quarter horses was marked by a smooth, compact build, short neck and back, deep barrel, and heavy muscular development. Most noticed were the jaws that bulged almost to the point of deformity. Some breeders called the Steel Dusts "Big Jaws." The massive jaws, in the words of Dan D. Casement, "serve as a fitting symbol of the tenacity and determination which mark the Steel Dust strain. They make strange contrast to the alert little ears that denote the keenness of the horse's



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sensibilities and furnish a substantial background for a forehead and eyes that bespeak deep stores of equine wisdom."

In the range country, Steel Dust mounts remained popular because they were useful. With little training, they made some of the most dependable cutting horses. At rodeos they carried riders to many triumphs. Clay McGonigal, 1879-1921, for two decades one of the world's top steer ropers, did his best work with a Steel Dust mount. On the polo fields, some of the most successful ponies were Steel Dusts or crosses between Steel Dusts and Thoroughbreds. The twisting and turning of a cutting horse was the best basic training one could want for work on a polo field or in a circus ring.

ALSO POPULAR were the descendants of Shiloh, although they were less easy to recognize. The more noted of Shiloh's many colts included Young Shiloh, Billy Boy, Jeff Davis, and four fillies—Shiloa, Mammoth, Bay Fanny Bailes, and Gray Fanny Bailes.

Many other noted quarter horses besides Tom Driver had both Steel Dust and Shiloh blood. So much so that in most cases it would be more accurate to refer to the Steel Dust-Shiloh strain rather than to the separate strains of the two foundation sires.

Among the better-known branch families with blood lines from both Steel Dust and Shiloh is that which stems from Billy, a dark brown horse foaled in Gonzales County about 1860. Billy was by Shiloh II—one of Shiloh's colts by Union—and was out of Ram Cat, a daughter of Steel Dust and Fanny Wolf. Billy's owner was W. B. Fleming of Belmont. He started the popular Billy line with a seal-brown mare, Paisana, by Brown Dick and out of Belton Queen.

Other noted branch families of quarter horses—all with blood lines from both Steel Dust and Shiloh—are those founded by the stallions Rondo, Cold Deck, Peter McCue, Joe Bailey, and Sykes Rondo. Peter McCue, 1895-1923, was an outstanding sprinter. He was bred by Samuel Watkins of Petersburg, Illinois. Related to both Rondo and Cold Deck, he had a pedigree that traced to Steel Dust three times and to Shiloh twice.

Old Sorrel, who became the foundation sire of almost all the two thousand quarter horses on the famous King Ranch, was a grandson of Peter McCue. Thus nearly every horse of the King Ranch's all-sorrel quarter horses—winners in many shows and on many fast tracks—is a descendant of both Steel Dust and Shiloh.

Scientific horse breeding at the King Ranch began soon after Robert J. (Bob) Kleberg, Jr., came home from the University of Wisconsin in 1916. He wanted an all-sorrel horse that could resist sunburn. The sorrel color doesn't fade when exposed to the hot Texas sun. Therefore, sorrel horses look well, even when not stabled. Since sorrel is a recessive color, it is easy to perpetuate. By breeding for solid sorrel, white can be eliminated. White on a horse in southern Texas is bad, as that is the part of the animal on which sand burn appears.

At the same time, Kleberg wanted a


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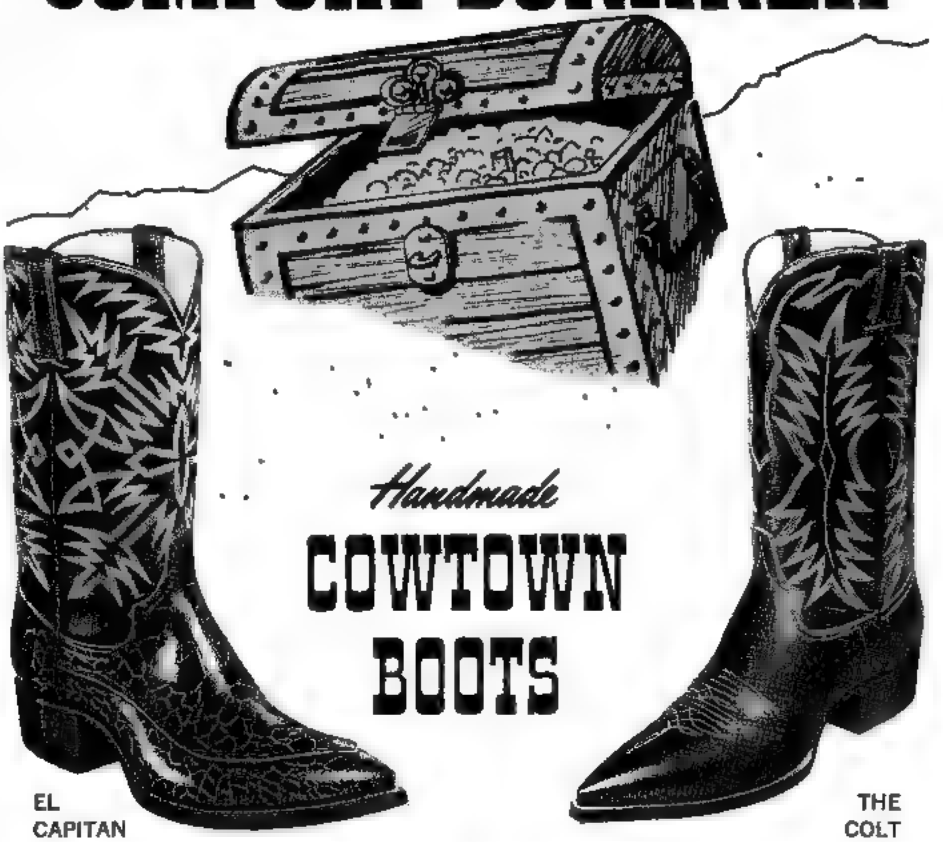


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mount that would have the endurance of a Thoroughbred and the cow sense of a quarter horse. Toward this end he used the line-breeding and inbreeding methods that the ranch already had begun with cattle.

Bob Kleberg obtained his original quarter-horse stallion in 1916 from a neighboring ranchman, George Clegg of Alice. Clegg had a band of fine quarter horses, including several colts. Bob asked his cousin, Caesar Kleberg, to pick out one. Caesar chose a six-month-old sorrel colt that was out of a Kentucky quarter-horse mare with considerable Thoroughbred blood. He succeeded in buying the colt for $125. This colt, later known as Old Sorrel, had been sired by Hickory Bill, a son of Peter McCue.

Soon Old Sorrel turned out to be the best cow horse on the vast King Ranch. He won many roping contests and short races. He had good conformation, cow sense, and other qualities that Bob Kleberg wanted. To try to perpetuate these qualities, he bred to Old Sorrel fifty of the best mares on the ranch, some part or pure thoroughbred.

Of Old Sorrel's colts, one of the most promising was Solis, whose dam was a Thoroughbred. Solis was mated with forty daughters of Old Sorrel, most of them from thoroughbred mares. Other sons of Old Sorrel used extensively in breeding were Babe Grande, Cardinal, Little Richard, Little Man, Hired Hand, and Macanudo, whose name is an Argentine colloquial word meaning perfection. Some were mated more with nieces than with half-sisters. Descendants of Old Sorrel were broken to ride and were appraised on behavior under the saddle as well as on appearance, measurements, and color. The most consistent success came from objective line breeding, but some good results were obtained from inbreeding.

The last son of Old Sorrel was Hired Hand, foaled in May, 1944. He was grand champion stallion at the State Fair of Texas in 1948. At the same fair in Dallas the reserve champion in the stallion class went to Hired Hand's full brother, Little Man, a 1942 foal. Their dam was the outstanding little quarter horse, Water Lily.

OF THE second-generation progeny of Old Sorrel, one of the noteworthy stallions was Wimpy. He was a double grandson of the foundation sire and a triple great-grandson of Hickory Bill. Equally popular was Peppy, a grandson of Old Sorrel through Little Richard and a great-grandson through Cardinal. He was grand champion quarter stallion at the Southwestern Exposition and Fat Stock Show at Fort Worth in 1941. At the Arizona State Fair he took the same honor. Peppy sired some of the most notable King Ranch colts, including many prize-winners.

Objective line breeding and occasional inbreeding retained to a large degree the exceptional qualities of Old Sorrel and improved many of them. When outside horses were used in breeding, this was not to bring in new blood but to obtain the qualities of individual mares. The ranch followed a drastic policy in discarding its culls. On one occasion, Kleberg's vaqueros drove 1,200 mares into Mexico and gave them away. Fine horses, on the other hand, seldom were sold.

In time, though, the King Ranch had enough superior quarter horses to sell some to eager buyers. Many were used for breeding on other ranches. Others were trained for the rodeo, the polo field, or the circus ring. The spectacular Liberty Act of the Ringling Brothers Circus was performed with quarter horses from the King Ranch.

A revival of interest in the quarter horse had become apparent in the 1930s. The quarter horse, observed Bud Warren of Perry, Oklahoma, "is an animal you can use to plow the garden in the morning, run a fast race in the afternoon, and saddle for the kids after supper."

Somewhat gropingly at first, writers for Western stock journals began turning out articles on the origin, history, conformation, and usefulness of the long-eclipsed quarter horse. The more persistent researchers in this field included Dan D. Casement of Kansas and Robert M. (Bob) Denhardt, then of Texas and later, for several years, editor of the *Western Horseman*.

At the Fort Worth Fat Stock Show in the spring of 1939, a group of breeders discussed the advisability of starting a quarter-horse association. A year later, on March 15, 1940, they formed the American Quarter Horse Association. In 1941 this organization published its first studbook and registry, and in 1948 it began issuing the *Quarter Horse Journal*.

Establishment of a national registry for quarter horses led to general recognition of this type of mount as a distinct breed; and newspapers and livestock journals began, correctly, to print Quarter Horse with capitals. In some of its strains, the Quarter Horse had been reasonably distinct all along. In 1910, William Anson, a Texas horse breeder of English birth, had written: "The American Quarter Horse is not only an established breed of remote origin but is a most useful type for nearly all Western ranch purposes."

The 1940s and 1950s saw an amazing spread of Quarter Horse shows and marked the emergence of the Quarter Horse as the Cinderella of the equine world. Almost every livestock show in

the West set up a division for Quarter Horses, with brisk competition. By 1966 there were 1,400 such shows. At the beginning of 1968 the United States had 497,302 registered Quarter Horses, many times the number for any other breed, and there were 8,302 in foreign countries. The figure for the United States compared with 347 in 1940, 108,000 in 1956, and 309,000 in 1964. On Independence Day, 1957, when President Dwight D. Eisenhower went out for exercise on his Gettysburg farm, he rode his pedigreed Quarter Horse.

Equally striking was the revival of quarter racing. Eagle Pass, Texas, which had as many as 250 sprinters at some of its meets, soon had competition from dozens of other places. Del Rio, a short distance up the Rio Grande, raised $200,000 to build a fine setup for quarter racing.

This revival became almost a rage. At the crossroads town of Skidmore, a match between two Texas sprinters saw $75,000 change hands. At San Angelo in 1946, a race between an Arizona horse and a Texas mount brought spectators from seven states. Other Texas cities that revived quarter racing included Abilene, El Paso, Richmond, Gladewater, and San Antonio. Californians opened quarter tracks at Corona, King City, Los Alamitos, and San Diego. By 1956 thirty such tracks were in use, from Florida to Montana and Oregon. Among the sites were Reno, Nevada; Phoenix, Arizona; Albuquerque, Raton and Ruidoso, New Mexico; and Orlando, Florida.

After absorbing the formerly independent organizations for quarter racing, the American Quarter Horse Association opened a racing division at Tucson. By 1965 nearly six thousand quarter races were scheduled on mutuel tracks, compared with twenty-five in 1945 and 1,300 in 1954.

At Los Alamitos, near Los Angeles, reported the Association secretary, Raymond D. Hollingsworth, fans spent a record $7,976,834 on the nags in a twenty-day all-Quarter Horse racing meet in the spring of 1956. The average daily attendance was 6,496. By this time, although quarter racing was most popular in the Southwest, even New York State had a Quarter Horse Association, with headquarters at Endicott.

By 1966 Quarter Horses were competing for more than five million dollars in purses on eighty recognized tracks in seventeen states. The top race was the All American Futurity, a 400-yard sprint run each Labor Day at Ruidoso Downs in New Mexico. This race, with a purse of $602,000 became the richest in the world, far outstripping the Kentucky Derby. In 1968 it attracted 14,500 fans to its scenic setting in the mountains, 6,800 feet above sea level. There brown Three Oh's, owned by Donald G. Stole of Abilene, Texas, won over twenty-eight other contenders.

COWPUNCHERS liked the restored quarter races because they tied in with their own traditions and their everyday work. The contests were modified replicas of the matches that had been held on the prairie turf in the days of the open range. The sprinters were like those used in riding fence lines and in cutting strays from a herd of cattle. Too, the races were held without the fanfare and big expense of most of those on longer tracks. The booted man from the ranch could do without warm-up heats, pari-mutuel gambling, and a wreath of flowers for the winning nag. He'd rather gargle his lungs for a cow pony from some nearby spread.

But if the quarter race still was the poor man's track sport, it didn't follow that all Quarter Horses were poor man's horses. The shows and the races encouraged better breeding that brought new appreciation and demand—and higher prices for choice mounts. If they proved their speed on the tracks, cow ponies valued at $10 to $150 a few years earlier became worth $1,500 to $15,000. In 1945, Buckskin Joe, after becoming champion stallion at the Fort Worth Fat Stock Show, was sold for $25,000. Two years later another winner of many ribbons, Peppy's Pepper, sired by the King Ranch's Peppy, brought $26,500. E. P. Waggoner of the famous Three D Stock Farm, between Dallas and Fort Worth, was said to have refused $50,000 for his American Royal champion Quarter Horse stallion, Poco Bueno. That price didn't seem too high for a sire whose twenty-five colts a year were bringing $1,000 to $3,500 each.

In the 1960s prices rose still higher. At Broken Bow, Oklahoma, in 1962 C.


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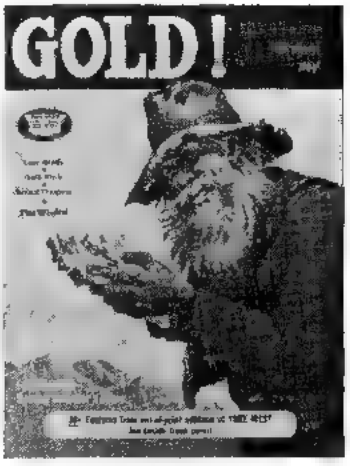


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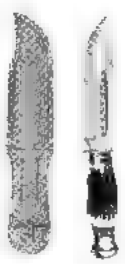
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D. Johnson of Amarillo, Texas, set a new Quarter Horse auction price record by paying $86,000 for an eight-year-old stallion, Clabber Bar. Another stallion, Go Man Go, brought $125,000 at a private sale.

Almost as popular as the shows and the races were the Quarter Horse cutting contests, of which more than a thousand were held each year, mainly at stock shows and county and state fairs. In this competition, which illustrated the everyday use of the horse on the ranch, the aim was to cut out of a more or less compact bunch a single steer, calf, or cow. The rider, by a little guiding from his knees, would show the horse which animal was to be driven out. After that, the trained mount would take over, with the rider merely staying in the saddle. The horse would out-think the wanted animal and, despite strong resistance, drive him out and keep him from returning.

The cutting contests culminated in the annual National Cutting Horse Futurity, whose purse rose to $95,730 in 1968, when 230 horses from 25 states and Canada competed in Fort Worth, using more than 800 cattle.

At the horse shows and the quarter tracks, talk often turned to old Steel Dust whose blood so many breeders claimed for their mounts. Yet almost nothing was known about him. The legends that pictured him as a prairie Pegasus were so hazy that he seemed a phantom steed. Some wondered if such a horse ever lived.

In stalls at the State Fair at Dallas, a drive of only half an hour from Ten Mile Creek, descendants of the Ellises, the Perrys, the Greenes, and the Batchlers saw sleek Quarter Horses on display. Cardboard diagrams tacked outside the stalls traced the pedigrees of many of them back to Steel Dust or Shiloh or both. Some folks began to rack their memories for horse lore they had heard long before from parents and grandparents.

Unfortunately, their recollections often failed to jibe with those of other descendants. Even those who should have known best the true story of Steel Dust disagreed on many details. The main outline of the stallion's life, though, did emerge a bit more clearly. And the truth bore out the legends of the prowess of Steel Dust on the quarter tracks and his fame in his own day as a sire.

Some of the legends from other sources proved to be so far from the truth that they were interesting only as folklore. One story had Steel Dust brought from Kentucky for a match against a Texas sprinter. He won not only that race but so many others that he impoverished a whole section of the cow country. Finally, this story goes, a delegation of Texans with six-shooters held a parley with the visiting Kentuckians and saw to it that Steel Dust didn't leave Texas.

Likely other folk tales of Steel Dust will appear, and even a few more bits of his history may come to light. His former haunts still are horse country. On stormy nights some of those who live on Ten Mile Creek may think they hear his whinny—and an answering neigh from old Shiloh on Bear Creek. If the two stallions could break away from their equine Valhalla, undoubtedly they would come back some night and finish that race of 1855 and thus settle for all time the question of which was the fleeter.

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## Skid Roads

*(Continued from page 20)*

twenty-five, another a hundred—we'd add it all up along with the twenty, thirty, fifty, hundred the boss had give us and give each man equal parts. If one spent all his money or lost it at poker or monte or faro, another boy'd lend him enough so his pleasure wasn't spoilt.

We put up at the best hotels and ate at the best restaurants. Loggers always like good food, heavy food, and plenty of it—steaks, roasts, beans, cabbage, dumplings, mulligan. Reminds me of the widow woman working as cook's helper at one of the camps. Had a little girl about six years old, who asks her mother what she was making and her mother says to her, "Just some stew, dear." Little girl says, "Mother, will loggers eat that?" Mother says, "Oh, honey, loggers eat anything just so's you pour a little whiskey on it."

We'd take off our boots at the hotel, change them for regular shoes, because you wasn't allowed nowhere decent with the boots on—they'd cut the floor. Sometimes we'd change into a regular suit if we was to be in town long, but if it was just a short stay we wore our logging clothes. We was kind of proud of being loggers and was admitted almost anywhere provided we left our boots behind—to the hotel dining rooms and best restaurants and theaters. And anywhere down on skid road we was more than welcome because they knowed we brought a pocketful of money to blow.

After we got our shoes on, we'd head for skid road—maybe eat first if we was hungry. The section we went to was around Third and Fourth Streets and north of Burnside, Portland's north end. It was made up of saloons, cheap restaurants and rooming houses, clothing stores, Painless Parker dentists, shooting galleries, penny arcades, and all such, but mostly saloons. That last was most important to the boys—saloons and girls.

IN PORTLAND it was Fritz's Variety Theater and the Paris House, which was above Erickson's Bar, but I don't think attached to it. In Astoria it was Sam Harris' Bar and Jack Steiner's Bar. They all run on about the same principle.

You go into the saloon and have a drink. Each saloon had a big dance hall right in front of the bar. You go there and girls keep coming down from upstairs till they was enough girls for every man. You'd whoop around dancing to an orchestra, and then interrupt to have drink, treating your partner. Usually you had whiskey and the girl drank grenadine, two-bits for two drinks. Dance awhile and buy a drink. Dance

awhile and buy another drink. Change partners several times around. Only thing that cost you any money was the drinks. All kinds of food free, dancing free, variety show free.

You never knowed the last names of the girls, just called them by Grace, Anna, Alice, May, Louise. Dress pretty well covered them, but they didn't wear nothing on but the one dress.

Maybe you'd take time off to gamble awhile. They was always a gambling parlor next door to the saloon, where you could pick whatever game you wanted—faro, monte, poker. Loggers generally stuck to their own games that they played in camp most—poker, blackjack, dice, pedro. You'd lose some money and go back and dance some more, and then maybe you'd go upstairs to one of the rooms of Fritz's or the Paris House. You'd forget the girl when you left there and she'd forget you.

Erickson's was really something in the way of saloons. It covered near a whole city block and had five entrances. It had a big gambling parlor. It had a concert stage. And it was fixed up with many mirrors and paintings and private booths. Loggers liked everything big, and it was just about the right size for them and the most popular place. And its leg show was the best.

Every hour or so on the stage, twenty-four hours running, they'd have a chorus from upstairs put on a leg show, and sometimes some vaudeville along with it; and they was really pretty good, some of them girls, I'd say as good as the regular stage. After I was married I'd sometimes go to Erickson's with my family and sit in one of the private booths and eat and drink beer and watch one of them shows. They bring you roast ox, thick sandwiches, Swedish hardtack, sausage, pickled herring, almost anything you had the notion for. All of it free except the drinks, which was five cents a mug for beer and two whiskey or other drinks for a quarter.

It was all legal, all well regulated. Gambling, drinks, and girls was all legal. They was several bouncers around and several policemen, and almost never any trouble. That's how you could bring a family there and sit in one of the private booths, and the kids not see anything they shouldn't. You'd say it was almost respectable. Loggers, anyhow, was never a rowdy bunch. Thinking back now, I come to the conclusion they was very peaceable men on the whole, maybe because they worked so hard they sweated out all the nastiness and meanness that are in some men. Hardly ever a quarrel or disagreement in the bunkhouse, even with poker and blackjack, hardly a cross word. And even on their sprees these boys was looking for a good time, but not for trouble. Just a blow-off to blow away the months of work. Why get into a fight and spoil a good time?

Anyway, this time I got throwed in jail. Fourteen of us went to Portland, including the owner and boss, H. H. Kempton himself. We was down at Erickson's after registering at the hotel and eating, and we was having a good time dancing and drinking with the girls,


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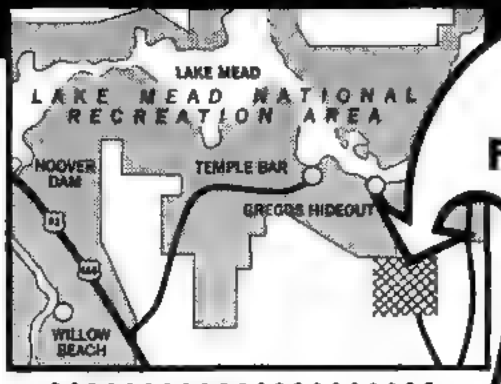


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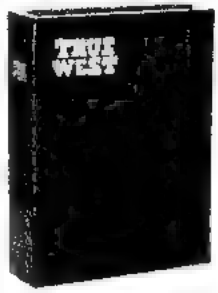


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mostly at H. H.'s expense, only he wasn't there; he'd stayed at the hotel. His brother, Jack Kempton, was along.

Jack was dancing with a girl, I think name of Pearl. He took out a twenty-dollar gold piece and flipped it, saying, "Heads it is or tails it is." This Pearl, she grabbed the gold piece while it was in the air.

"You give it to me," she says, probably joshing him. Never did find out.

"The hell I did," he says.

She starts off with it and he slugs her. About that time somebody put in a police call and the room begun to fill with an army of cops. I skedaddled out of there. Next we learned they'd arrested all the boys and throwed them in jail. It was later we learned that. I went back to the St. Charles and went to bed.

Next morning the boss asks me where the rest of the gang was. I told him, "When I left there the place was full of cops."

H. H. Kempton says, "Just like I expected. It's like that half the time. I bring you up here to enjoy yourselves and you wind up in trouble." He give me $200 and told me to go down and settle the thing.

The boys was in jail, all right, and I had to wait around till their turn come up for a hearing. Everybody told how it happened, the cops and Jack Kempton and the girl. And the judge, who was a wrinkled bird with white whiskers, says the girl had to give back the twenty-dollar gold piece. Then he says to all our boys, "Five dollars or five days."

It's my time to step forward with the money to pay the fines. "Where do you come into this?" the judge asks me.

"Me," I says very innocent, "I'm just paying off the fines. The boss sent me down here. H. H. Kempton, sir."

"Hm."

A cop steps forward and looks me over close. "He was there, too, Your Honor. I seen him there."

"I don't remember it," I says.

"Ha! Drunk!" the judge says.

"I didn't say that," I says. "I just said I don't remember." I figured I was being mighty clever. A man can't remember a lot of things. So you can't prove he's lying.

"What are you to these boys?" He pointed to the twelve of them—hook tenders, rigging slingers, swampers—all part of the crew of a yarding donkey engine that had broke down.

I swallered a couple times. "Foreman, Your Honor."

"And you run out on them?"

"I don't rightly recollect."

"When they was in trouble you run out on them?"

"Can't seem to remember, Judge."

"You was drunk!"

The judge wagged his finger at me, looking like the old goat he probably was. "Ten dollars *and* five days. Next case."

SOON AFTERWARD my bad accident happened. Accidents have a funny way of happening when you least expect them. I've had my full share, but no more'n my share, I guess, considering the nature of the kinds of work I've undertook all my life. Had quite a few busted ribs, a finger near cut off, two or three busted legs, a broke wrist, and that skinning up I told about already. They talk about the wild and woolly West, down Texas, New Mexico, Arizona way. I'd stake anybody a sizeable bet that they was fifty cowboys killed in different kinds of accidents to one ever shot by outlaws or gunmen, because the nature of that work is pretty dangerous too; but I don't think near as dangerous as logging and mill work was in my day. Now they's all sorts of safety precautions, and still it's dangerous. Then it was raw work, each man on his own, and the devil take him if he don't watch out.

Some fellers just naturally take to accidents the way others do to diseases. That kind don't last long. Like the case of a feller named Al King. It all happened to him within two years, started in a mill. Feller named Charlie Thorne, running the engine, went to put a edger belt on a pulley, and it caught hold of this Al King, spun him around like a pinwheel, then threw him loose off the shaft of the edger. That belt tore all his clothes off, stripped him naked, bruised one knee and broke an arm in two places. That laid him up for six months and decided him to quit. Next, this lad Al King goes to farming. Not more'n two months at it, when his team run away, swung the blade of the plow over his leg, and near cut it off. Well, he was sewed up and patched up. Took a long while for that leg to heal, and left him with a limp. He figures he's through with farming, and goes to logging. Wasn't working there long when he got in between the rollaway and the logging wagon just when the next log was eased down where he was binding down the load. The next log cracked his head like a nut. There he were, hanging there by the head, pinned between the two logs at the top of the load, and head mashed up like nothing you'd like to see.

Of the many accidents I seen in my time, I got in mind another one that illustrates the same thing only in a different way. It may be being afraid of an accident often brings it about, with the type that has one accident after another.

This was the time I was working at Muckle's Sash and Door factory, worked part-time on the edger and part-time on the bolter saw, a circular band saw. They was about equally dangerous, but the bolter saw was regarded as more so. Finally the boss says to this Burt Kimble, "You better stay on the edger, Burt, permanent, and let Reno run the bolter saw permanent." I was a better hand at it than Burt. He seemed averse to the shift. He says to me after the boss is gone, showing me his left hand, "I done that on that there edger. I'm afraid of it." The three long fingers of his left hand had been snipped off just below the fingernails.

I was sorry for the feller. I says, "You be careful and nothing won't happen."

Few days after we'd traded jobs, he was running cedar timber through the edger, forgot hisself and reached his

hand forward to flick away a strip laying there. The edger jerked off and jerked his hand right into the saw. Zing! That's all there was to it. Fingers laid there quivering on the edger table.

He give a yell and run out the door and run down the street holding what was left of his right hand. Didn't bother to pick up his fingers, nor did I. I chased out after him. He had took out before me but was about a block ahead, time I hit the street. He run the whole way to a doctor's office. I come in and joined him, and the doctor kept me there to help out. I had to hold his hand while the doctor was sewing it.

After that he was kinda handicapped for work of any kind. His wife divorced him because he couldn't support her. Last time I seen him two or three years later, he was on skid road and skidding fast.

I WAS RUNNING this logging train when my bad accident happened. The tracks had been laid right on the skid road and it worked fine that way. Was the second winter I was at Kempton's and very rainy weather. We'd pulled up alongside the river rollaway and I was out there supervising the unloading and skidding into the river. We was unloading the first car and a crooked log stopped the bunch from going down, so I stepped up there with my log jack to roll that crooked log over. When it loosened, the jack sprung loose with it. That log came around and pinned me to another log, pinned my shoulders near together in the front of me pulling about everything loose from my backbone. I let out a yell could be heard from there to China.

The boys said the log swung back again. I dropped onto the track and rolled into the river. The boys fished me out, and kept me laying there while they sent for a doctor. Carried me on a stretcher to the boat and took me to a hospital in Astoria. The doctor at the hospital said quite a few ribs had sprung loose from the backbone and a number was broken, and one collar bone was broke. Put me under ether to push me back where I belonged—don't know how they done it—and taped and strapped me up.

I was there in the hospital maybe three months, then two months back at camp laying around and taking it easy. Kempton paid every penny of my hospital and doctor bills, though he was in no way obligated to, and even allowed a small wage to accumulate. During this time I was laying around the bunkhouse, Mrs. Kempton was mighty good to me too—brought me soups and cake and special things, and a hot water bottle for my aches, for I ached all the time. Ached in my chest and shoulders for six months.

Finally tried out an easy foreman job but it wasn't no use. Couldn't even take setting down for very long. To make it fairer to the Kemptons I went home to the house where my mother was living. My skid road had ended my life as a big timber man.

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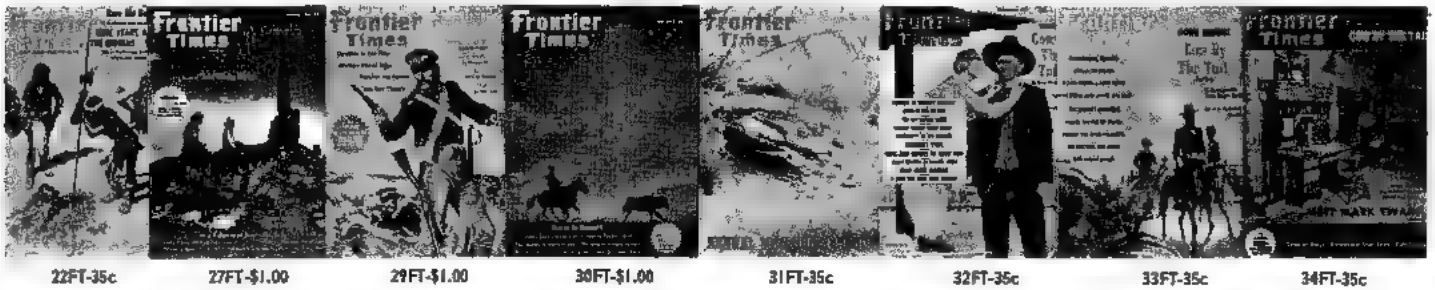


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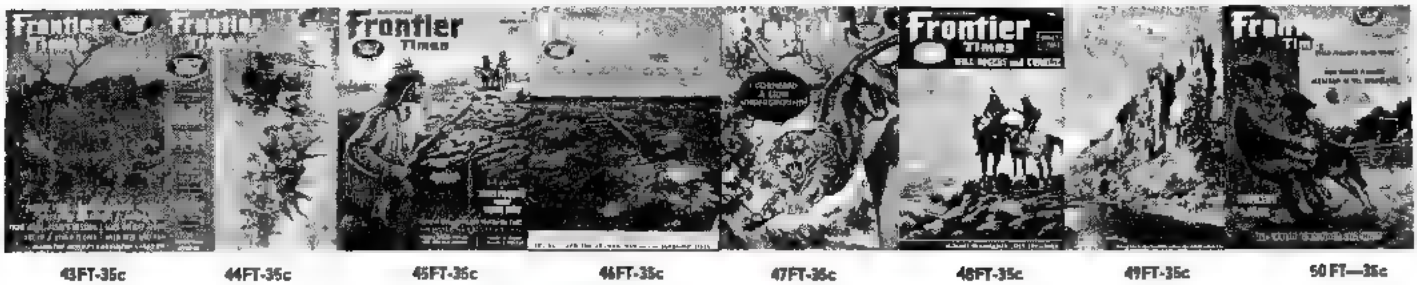


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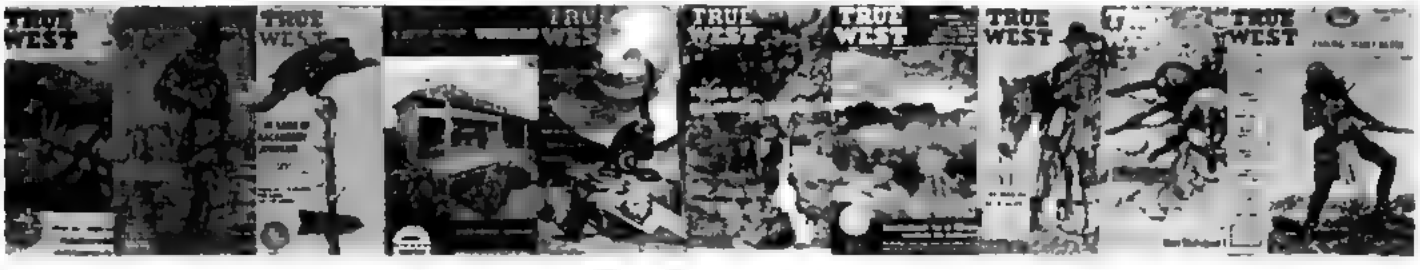


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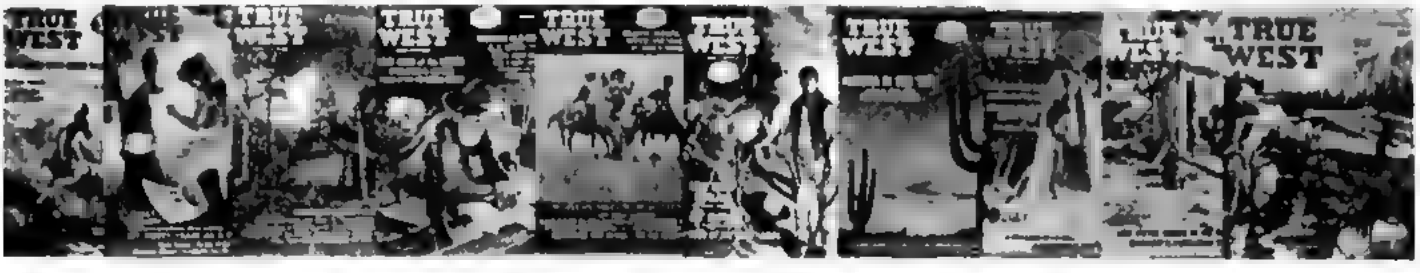


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## Wild Old Days

*(Continued from page 37)*

Ranch work at this time had been proceeding on schedule and a lot of the prehaying operations had been completed. There was one job still to be done. This was to bring Old Tom, the Clydesdale stallion, and his harem of fifty mares up to the corrals to get the colts branded and to put Tom back into his workday harness.

Old Tom was a real range stallion who ruled his band of mares with an iron hand and he was also a dangerous animal if anyone trespassed on what he considered his territory. He had attacked several people who had ridden into his breeding field.

It so happened that a new hand had been taken on just a few days before and he had been warned especially and repeatedly by the foreman to be most careful around Old Tom—but he made one mistake. He rode too close to the band of mares and like a flash Tom charged his horse, then wheeled and kicked wickedly with both feet. He hit the rider below the knee and broke his leg.

The man was lifted from his horse and carried into the ranch house where the foreman applied first aid with splints and bandages made from flannelette bed sheets torn into strips. A team was hitched to the democrat, and a mattress and blankets were placed for the injured man to be delivered to the hospital in Calgary. He was accompanied by a driver and a helper. I was the helper.

By the time the doctor had set the leg and the patient was resting it was around 9:00 p.m. Within an hour the democrat and its two occupants were on the road back to the ranch. The first four or five miles out of town were decent going but on the chilly side. Then a wind blew up that was most penetrating. All the blankets in the democrat failed to stop the numbness that was overtaking the travelers. The air seemed to be heavily laden with moisture and when breathed in, was like swallowing ice particles so that a person was getting blasts of cold from both the outside and the inside.

BEFORE we had gone another five miles the driver's hands got so cold he could not hang onto the reins, so he knotted the reins and hung them around his shoulders. He was having difficulty holding the team down to a moderate rate, and all his arm swinging and hand clapping was barely keeping his circulation alive.

As we got within two miles of the ranch there was a gate to open. When I attempted to get off the democrat I fell to the ground but managed to get a hold on the wheel and pulled myself into a standing position. I got the gate opened and closed and the next stop was the ranch house. It was a tough job getting the team unharnessed but this was finally accomplished. A good fire was built in the heating stove and after about an hour's time and several cups of good hot coffee we got to bed.

Quick weather changes can and do happen in Alberta from time to time, but what is described here was most unusual. The same remark is made every time an extra warm Chinook blows up and changes temperatures up to fifty degrees in a couple of hours. In this case it was penetrating and biting chill for a short period of time and by morning the weather was quite agreeable. Everytime we tried to tell anyone that we had neary frozen to death the previous night we would be laughed at. However, such is Alberta weather.

---

## Ruckus at Old Fort Musselshell

*(Continued from page 25)*

H. Christ." His glassy eyes were mean and he was surly drunk. "While I'm in charge here it's cash on the line."

"We hollered our heads off for the ferry boat to fetch us across the river. You must be stone deef, mister," Walt Sizer said.

"I heard you bellering all right. Now you two better get the hell outa here." The black-whiskered gent swayed a little as he reached under the bar.

"Not so fast, mister," I said. I had my gun in my hand. "Come up empty-handed and come up slow. Or else."

Black Whiskers came up with both hands reaching for the rafters. "What is this? A holdup?" he asked.

"Nope. All we want is a couple shots of booze and a couple bottles of beer, and some canned goods," I told him, and added, "The Circle C credit is good here."

"With me it ain't," Black Whiskers said.

It was then that Sizer vaulted over the bar and landed on the man's back, riding him down on all fours. Then Sizer's six-shooter slapped across the guy's jaw and the high bridge of his nose, spurting blood from both nostrils. The black-whiskered gent let out a howl of pain, and yelled, "I got a-plenty. Don't kill me!"

There was a tight-lipped grin on Sizer's face as he got to his feet, standing straddle of the bleeding "bartender." "Tell me one thing," Sizer's voice was gritty, "before I tromp your guts out. Is the Circle C outfit's credit good here at Fletcher's place?" And he kicked the man's belly to emphasize his words.

"Yeah! Just turn me loose and you fellers can have the damn place and welcome to it!"

Sizer let him get up then, and grabbing him where his galluses crossed, propelled him out the door. Once the man was free he broke into a run, and the last we saw of him he was on the riverbank taking off like a scared coyote.

SIZER filled a couple of shot glasses from the bar bottle, then fished a couple of quart bottles of beer from the tub of melting ice. Under the bar was a sawed-off, double-barreled shotgun. "That's what Black Whiskers was reachin' for when you throwed down on him Walt."

It was past sundown and the shadows of dusk were gathering outside, but before lighting the big Rochester lamp that hung by a chain from the ridge log, we



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pulled down the windowshades. That precaution dated back to the pioneer days in Montana during the Indian wars when the rule was never to light a light before covering the windows with gunnysacks or blankets, and with that black-whiskered gent on the prowl outside we were taking no chances. With the lamp lit and the wick turned down with barely enough light to see by, me'n Sizer made ourselves at home, taking turns tending bar. When we got hungry we prowled the store shelves for what there was available, then settled down with a deck of worn cards and the poker chips we found in the dealer's rack, preparing to make a night of it and keeping track of what we owed Walt Fletcher.

It must have been close to midnight when I felt the call of nature and headed for the back door. If there had been a chalk line I was in no condition to walk it, and so I staggered out into the darkness. That's the last thing I remembered —that and the dull thud on the back of my skull. Then black oblivion.

I came alive with the frightening sense that I was drowning in the muddy water of the Missouri, but it was only Walt Sizer standing over me with an empty water bucket. "What happened?" I asked in a voice that croaked in my eardrums.

"That black-whiskered s-o-b hit you over the head with a wagon spoke, that's what happened. I ran out and let him have both barrels of the sawed-off scatter gun."

"Kill him?"

"Nope. He got away in the dark, but he'll be pickin' buckshot out of his rump for a week. I figured you were dead enough to bury when I lugged you inside. How you feelin' by now?"

"Like as if my skull was split wide open by a double-bitted axe."

When I gingerly felt the knot on the back of my head, my hair felt sticky, and when I looked at my hand in the lamplight it was covered with blood. Sizer found a tin of salve on the shelf and rubbed it in gently after sponging off some of the gore.

It now was getting daylight. I made out an I.O.U. for the whiskey and beer and the canned goods we had consumed, charging it to the Circle C outfit and signing my name. Then we went outside to cut for sign of the black-whiskered gent, prowling the brush thickets with our six-shooters in our hands, but found nary a sign of him.

The rowboat was where we had left it and we rowed back across the river, tied it up in a willow thicket and went to work on the Tin Lizard.

WE WERE ABOUT finished and were wiping the grease off our hands on an old gunnysack when George Kuster and a couple of UL cowpunchers rode up.

"You're a sight for sore eyes, George," I said. "I have a letter for you from Jake Myers but with the road washed out and no horses at the Fletcher place, we'd have had to go another five miles afoot to deliver it."

George Kuster shifted his weight to one stirrup as he looked me'n Sizer over


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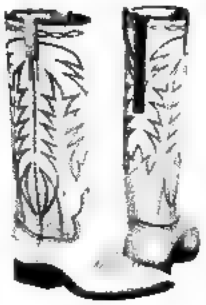

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like we were rank strangers and had some contagious disease. Kuster had a .30-30 Winchester carbine across his saddle. "I reckon as how," Kuster turned his head toward the two UL cowpunchers with him, "these are the pair of toughs that Del Bun was talkin' about. They fit the description he gave us." There was an amused look in his eyes as he spoke.

"What have you two been up to, kid?" Kuster looked down at me. "Accordin' to Del's drunk talk you pistol-whipped him, filled his rear full of buckshot and took over Fletcher's saloon. We found him hidin' in the brush alongside the road. I took this Winchester from him, put him on his horse and had a couple of my boys take him to the ranch and ride herd on him until he sobers up. He looked like somebody shore gave him a workin' over." Kuster leaned a little forward and asked, "What happened to your head, kid?"

"That black-whiskered gent you call Del Bun bent a wagon spoke over my head. He aimed to kill me. That's what happened!" I answered hotly.

"Del says he's goin' to swear out warrants for you two. Claims you tried to do him in and throw his carcass in the river. Says Walt Fletcher left him in charge of his place, and after you beat him up you ran him off and took over in a big way," Kuster informed us.

"Who the hell is this Del Bun?" I asked.

"He's a wolfer and trapper. Quiet and friendly when he's sober, but ugly when he's drunk. Whiskey makes him plumb locoed. Now you'd better tell me the whole story." George Kuster swung down from his saddle and laid the Winchester on the ground. "Once Del sobers up I'll have a medicine talk with him. Tell him how we caught him hid in the brush waiting to shoot both of you from ambush. That'll change his mind about havin' bench warrants sworn out."

I gave Kuster Jake's letter and while he read it me'n Sizer got the Tin Lizard off the block, pumped up the tires and filled the radiator with water. It was when I was putting the blocks back in the car that I first noticed the gun scabbard was empty.

"That thievin' Del Bun aimed to kill us with my own saddle gun," I told Sizer. I spoke in a tone loud enough for the UL cowhands to overhear.

Kuster handed the saddle gun to me and said, "Del bragged about stealing the gun he aimed to kill you with. He had you boys figured as outlaws and was out to collect the bounty on your hides, if any."

IT WAS ABOUT 10 a.m. by the time the pint bottle of whiskey we'd brought with us from the Fletcher saloon was passed around for the second time, and we'd become friends with the two UL cowhands, Joe Martin and Shorty Jones. According to Kuster Del was easy to get along with once you got acquainted with him and he wasn't full of whiskey, and me'n Sizer took the wagon boss's word for it with mental reservations. For my part I hoped I'd seen the last of the hardcase wolfer. He might be the salt of the earth and all that, but in my book the name of Del Bun, locoed drunk or cold sober, was a dirty word.

Me'n Sizer took our time going back to the ranch, talking the ruckus with Del Bun over from all angles and deciding to tell the truth of what had happened. Right or wrong Jake Myers would chaw us out for getting drunk, and that was what we did. I told Jake when Fletcher's bill for the damages came to the ranch he could charge it on the books to me, but Jake said he doubted that Walt Fletcher would ever send a bill because the Circle C had advanced him the money to buy the place.

Just the same Jake set me'n Sizer afoot for a couple of days, sawing a pile of four-foot cordwood into stove lengths for the kitchen range. We used a long cross cut saw with handles at either end, then split the pine logs with a double-bitted axe until we had blisters on our hands. When the fall roundup started Jake sent me to rep with the UL outfit with my own string of horses. Kuster had sent Jake word that roundup would start September 10 and that one Circle C rep would be plenty to get the job done.

THE CIRCLE C had sold the Rock Creek Ranch on the Missouri, which had been used for a winter line camp, to Tom Robbins, a cowman from Dakota. He was a big six-foot, rawboned man with red hair and a friendly grin. The following year after the ruckus at Fort Musselshell Jake Myers sent me to the Rock Creek Ranch with some kind of legal document regarding water rights that needed Tom Robbins' signature. It was in November, with below zero weather and snow on the ground. The daylight hours were short and it was getting dusk and spitting snow by the time I reached the Rock Creek Ranch.

Tom Robbins and a couple of his cowhands were finishing their barn chores. I unsaddled and put my horse in a bedded stall with hay in the manger. I kicked off my black angora wool chaps and hung them across my saddle and left my six-shooter in the deep pocket of the chaps.

"You can bed down with the cook," Tom Robbins informed me when I handed him the long envelope containing the papers he was to sign. And that was okay by me.

It was dark by the time we got to the log cabin. I was well acquainted with Robbins' two cowhands, Rawhide Dan and the halfbreed Joe Contway. The only man I didn't know was the cook, a clean-shaven man with black hair and a flour-sack apron tied around his middle, and nobody thought to introduce us. I shed my sheep-lined coat and kicked off my overshoes and bellied up to the warm cookstove to thaw out a little. I was hungry as a wolf and there was the satisfying odor of black coffee and frying steaks and sourdough biscuits.

"Supper about ready, Del?" Tom Robbins asked.

"Come and get 'er!" the cook sang out, forking the steaks over in the iron skillet.

I quickly backed away from the cook-



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stove, and eyed the cook covertly, sure now that he was Del Bun. But there was nothing in his clean-shaven face to remind me of the black-whiskered, half-drunk trapper and wolfer me'n Sizer had had the run-in with, nor in his goodnatured banter. Nothing but the pale eyes. Nor did he seem to recognize me with a week's stubble of whiskers and frostbitten nose and cheeks.

It was only when we sat down at the large round kitchen table and Robbins made mention of my name that I saw Del Bun giving me the once over as he set the platter of hot biscuits on the table. The rest of the men took it for granted that we were acquainted with one another, and it wasn't until we bedded down for the night that Del Bun or myself made mention that we had met before.

When Tom Robbins had casually suggested that Del share his bed with me, the cook just nodded carelessly and let it go at that. During the evening I'd done some futile skull work, trying to find a plausible excuse to go to the barn and get my six-shooter, but I could find no legitimate reason to bundle up and light a lantern to see my way through the snowstorm to the stable.

I had noticed that once Del Bun found out who I was he no longer directed any conversation my way. He tended strictly to his cooking chores, washing dishes, pots and skillets, and keeping an eye on his mound of rising sourdough bread in the large dishpan. But that didn't keep me from being a little edgy.

With the table cleared, Tom Robbins, Joe Contway and Rawhide Dan started playing penny ante stud, using matches for poker chips, while I leafed through an old magazine by the light of the Rochester lamp in the center of the table. From the drift of their talk I learned that in addition to his cooking chores Del Bun was running a trap line.

When it came bedtime the three cowhands rolled out their bedrolls on the floor at the far end of the large one-room cabin. Del Bun lit a lantern and set it down on one end of the filled wood-box. Then he wound up the alarm clock and put it beside the lantern. When he extinguished the lamp he spread his bedroll out on the floor between the kitchen range and the wood-box. Then Del went back to the chopping block where he had been slicing breakfast steaks, using a large kitchen butcher knife and a meat cleaver. He wiped the meat block surface with a wet dishrag and shoved the meat cleaver into a strap on the side of the block, leaving the butcher knife beside the pile of cut steaks.

I sat on my side of Del's bed next to the stove and pulled off my boots and shed my blanket-lined canvas winter pants, and crawled in under the tarp and blankets, using my rolled up pants for a pillow. I had already spotted the long heavy iron poker near the cookstove, just in case.

DEL BUN finally took off his apron and sat down on the floor on the opposite side of the wide bed to remove


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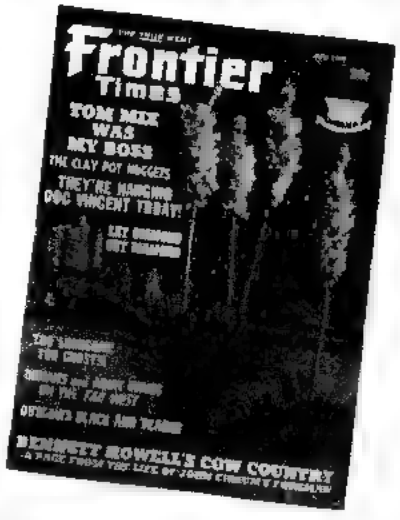


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his boots and pants. My eyelids were partly closed but I'd been watching his every move, and just as he bent over to blow out the lantern my glance shifted to the chopping block. The butcher knife was now missing.

The cabin was now in darkness except for the dull red glow from the cookstove. Del crawled in on his side of the bed, leaving a wide space between us as we both edged to our own sides. I had worked one arm free of the blankets so that if Del made a move to knife me in the back, I could grab the poker.

Sleep was out of the question and I lay there tense as a coiled rattler. Somebody at the far end of the room was snoring faintly, and my heart pounded in cadence to the ticking of the alarm clock as I lay awake for what seemed an eternity. Time had no meaning.

Finally, I heard Del clear his throat and I got ready to reach for the poker.

"Take that damn six-shooter outa my back," Del Bun said in a harsh whisper, "and we'll talk things over." What he said didn't make sense.

"How about that butcher knife you got in your hand?" I came back at him in a dry whisper.

"I ain't got no butcher knife." Del threw back the tarp and blankets and sat up. And I did the same.

"I left my six-shooter in my chaps pocket at the barn," I told him.

"Something hard like a gun barrel's been prodding me in the ribs." Del spoke in a puzzled voice.

"We've been lying back to back," I whispered. "Crawl out and see for yourself."

We both crawled out. Del reached under the tarp and blankets and groped around with his hand, then I heard him chuckle softly. "A damn piece of firewood! That's what's been proddin' me in the ribs!"

We sat on opposite sides of the bed, hunkered down on sock feet, with silly looks on our faces. Then Del reached for his flannel shirt and handed me a sack of Bull Durham and a book of cigarette papers. We each rolled a smoke and Del lit a kitchen match and held the flame cupped in his hands to give me a light. We took a couple of long drags and smoked in silence for awhile.

Del pointed towards the wooden chopping block on its stubby legs, and there in the dim glow from the firebox of the stove I could now see the butcher knife in its wide leather strap alongside the meat cleaver.

It was sure a horse on both of us.

"What do you say, we bury the hatchet and shake hands on it," Del volunteered. "We can talk things over after breakfast."

"It's a deal." We shook hands, stubbed out our cigarette butts and crawled back under the tarp and blankets.

"I get kinda loco when I'm drunk," Del Bun told me. "I try to stay away from the stuff."

"That goes for me, too," I whispered back.

We went to sleep on that, a peaceful sleep without enmity.

By daylight the storm had blown itself out and the skies had cleared. After breakfast while I helped with the barn chores, Tom Robbins signed the legal papers I had brought along. Del had to leave to tend to his trap line, so we never got around to having that medicine talk. Tom Robbins and Rawhide Dan and Joe Contway had cattle to feed and waterholes to chop open in the river ice, and I had a long day's ride ahead of me back to the Circle C Ranch.

After all there was really nothing much to talk about. Me'n Del both knew that it was nothing more than a drunken argument and, like myself, I figured he was mighty glad nothing serious had happened at Fort Musselshell. We had shaken hands, not exactly in friendship, but more like a truce, and that's what the whole deal called for.

That was destined to be the last time I ever saw Del Bun. The Circle C outfit was sold in 1916 and it was in the cards that I left Montana for keeps.

---

### The Cherokees Remember Their Badmen

*(Continued from page 21)*

words: Billy Pigeon told this, they say:

"A long time ago, when the magicians were being taught, it was during the war [Civil War]. At that time they [the masters] depended upon the Provider [God] for them [the neophytes] to become magicians because man, as an individual, was doing so poorly for himself, fighting a war. The Provider made it possible for them to learn.

"And so, for a fact, the Cherokees became wise. Into the image of anything going about in the middle of the night that they decided to make themselves, they made themselves. They made themselves into hoot owls or screech owls, and also just about anything else: they made themselves into wolves and spiders. And they indeed were magicians. And that is the reason that they were able to survive war coming at them from every direction.

"Now! This which is written down happened in former days. A man told this about the war a long time ago, and it was very interesting. This which is written down was told by Tsowa Huliegwa, and one remembers it."

There is something intriguing in a hypothetical nocturnal tableau wherein Judge Parker's deputies laboriously toil through the wilderness upon the trail of a wizard, while at the very same time, many miles to the east, judicial repose is shattered by the hooting of an owl.

IN THE MATTER of Crawford Goldsby, known to infamy as Cherokee Bill, the Cherokees enthusiastically agree with the white man. They are of the opinion that his March 17, 1896 appointment with Parker did not come a minute too soon. He was a fly in the tribal ointment. The sympathy of his Cherokee contemporaries was not necessarily diluted by his white, Negro, Sioux, and Mexican blood, but by his catholicity in preying upon everybody within reach. Even those who were kin to him felt the urge to maintain a deafening silence about the fact, as witness "the late

Tsatsi Ayuhini," who in the following narratives does not appear to be exactly bursting with family pride:

"The late Tsatsi Ayuhini told this which I am going to write.

"A long time ago he found out what Cherokee Bill did in his living about here and there. (It is true that he and the late Cherokee Bill were relatives, and the late Tsatsi Ayuhini used to say that Cherokee Bill was indeed a robber.) The late Tsatsi Ayuhini was quite secretive; indeed, it was only when he concluded that you were his friend that he would tell you something if there was something that he could tell.

"Near a very large cedar tree, in a great hole in the rocks, this Cherokee Bill and four others had a hiding place. They were all together. Tsatsi used to go there, he used to say when told about these things. For a fact the hole was a huge one, and the bluff was a big one; but now there is no hole there, just a rocky bluff.

"That is where all of them, Cherokee Bill and his followers, lived. They went from place to place upon horseback, and right near there [the hideout] they had their money hidden. They had the money in a hollow stump."

IT IS IN REGARD to Ned Christie, slain on November 3, 1892 by a posse which was forced to employ a three-pound cannon and dynamite in blasting him out of his stronghold, that the Cherokees—and for that matter, shoals of whites—disagree most vehemently with the accepted version of just who and what he was.

The published accounts of him, each somewhat more given to inaccuracy of detail than the one that immediately preceded it, paint Ned Christie as a murderer, robber, thief, and bootlegger, and all in all one of the vilest of the territorial villains. The Cherokees indignantly deny every charge in unison and go right on believing that he was a just and honorable man who fell victim to the monstrous injustice of the white man. They say that he elicited the especial attention of Ft. Smith through a tragedy of mistaken identity: a trigger-happy deputy, thinking that Christie was someone else, drew on him in the dusk, and that Christie, not knowing that he was dealing with an officer, merely defended himself.

His tribesmen point out that Ned Christie came from one of the most distinguished fullblood families in the Cherokee Nation, that his brother Jackson served in the National Council and upon the Supreme Court, and that at the time of his involvement with the law he himself was holding one of the highest offices in his government, that of a member of the Executive Council, which was the cabinet, so to speak, of the principal chief.

Cherokees do not deny that Christie's fame as the most dangerous outlaw of them all was justified; for he was a legendary marksman, and a gunsmith as well. But they deny that he held any malice toward anyone. He simply had a low opinion of Judge Parker's ideas of


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justice for Indians, even innocent ones.

In the hope of standing off his Federal enemies Christie built for himself a fort of sorts near what is now known as Golda's Mill, an Adair County watermill which is one of the oldest commercial establishments in Oklahoma. In glaring contrast to the penny-dreadful concept of the bloodthirsty gang-leader holding orgiastic court in his hideout is this touching vignette of Christie's actual mode of life:

"Ned Christie's house was a double log cabin. There was a watermill there, and across a small stream was the house of the man that many people, in telling about him, said was evil. But he was not evil: he was a superlatively kind man.

"They say that he used to cook cornbread in his fireplace all the time. In cooking cornbread, he put it into a big pot which had a lid; and to cook it he put fire on top of the lid. He also had dried squirrels, and he pounded up these dried squirrels in a wooden mortar. He put the big pot upon the fire and put cornmeal and water into it. Then he added the squirrels to this, and when all was well done, it became delicious to eat. And he also put sweet potatoes into the fireplace and covered them over with fire, and he also cooked peas. He himself, the late Ned Christie, was the cook.

"Fun-seeking young men sought him out and played marbles there at Ned Christie's home. They ate there as often as possible. These young men were marble players. The late Ned Christie loved to play marbles.

"He was a surprisingly kind man, and he was not evil."

And thus we discover yet another facet to Christie's depravity: corrupter of youth, as he leads the young and impressionable down the primrose path of marble-shooting and cornbread-eating.

With almost scientific detachment the Cherokees will discuss their badmen with anyone. But it is advisable to stay off the subject of Ned Christie, upon whom they gaze back through the years with a grave tenderness. A slip of the lip could send one on the scout into the hills.

---

### Tragedy at Pig Pen

*(Continued from page 35)*

and the Mexican, being small, had left quite a long piece of leather. He had taken both of Bill's guns, so was well armed.

The posse crossed into Mexico at the Lang Ranch about sundown on the 27th, the same day Bill and Alice had been found. They trailed the couple through Diablo Canyon and to the top of the Sierra Madre. There the men decided from the direction Andreas and Joseph were taking where they were going, so the posse turned back to get cars instead of horses and be waiting to head them off.

After the inquest, Mrs. Cade Wright and Viola Wright, near neighbors, had helped lay Alice out for burial, and Bob Caylor and Shadd Hobbs had taken the two bodies into Hachita, New Mexico, for burial. They were laid to rest in the same grave on the 28th of June. Mrs. Viola Wright, now ninety-three years old, still lives in the Animas Valley of New Mexico.

Again the posse (joined by Ope Parker, who had hurried home from El Paso), together with Bob Caylor, Shadd Hobbs, and two Mexican brothers Tiburcio and Santiago Echeveriel, who had worked for Parker a couple of years and begged to go, crossed the line into Mexico and headed for the Ojitos Ranch. They reached there too late to catch Andreas, but he had left Josepha at another ranch nearby. The posse brought her out and to the jail in Silver City. She was kept there four months, at which time her uncle (the jailer) and Herb McGrath, sheriff, turned her loose, saying she had committed no crime. She was six or seven months pregnant.

FRANK STIDHAM, my cousin (who had been neighbor and pall bearer for Alice and Bill), had a Mexican working for him who had been there for years and was trusted completely. His name was Juan Flores. Frank decided since they hadn't been able to outsmart Andreas in Old Mexico, maybe they could try to lure him into the States again. Frank went to Dave Parker with his plan, and Parker liked the idea.

Frank would let Juan take a couple of good saddle horses into Mexico—one horse, Ned, had been roped from the wild bunch and was fast and tough; the other was supposedly to carry Juan's pack. He was to find Andreas and get him to come back on this side of the line to help Juan steal Frank's remuda. Juan was to say that Frank had fired him and he wanted to get even. The lure was strong, since Andreas knew Frank had good saddle horses and plenty of them. Dave Parker was a little uneasy at the risk Frank was taking and told him so. He said, "Juan may never come out again himself," but Frank was firm and said he knew Juan; better still, Juan knew Frank. So Dave told Frank to go ahead and try, and if Frank lost any horses, Dave would pay for them.

Everything went off fine. Juan said he found Andreas the fourth day in Mexico and talked him into trying for Frank's remuda. Andreas needed money badly, and he knew they would have no trouble selling any amount they could steal, so they started back for the line. On the third day they were high in the mountains but near enough for a quick dash into the States. The closer they got to the line, though, the more uneasy Andreas got. They camped for the night and were smoking and planning their next move when, down on the valley floor, cars began to move in from every direction.

A runner had been sent out from Ojitos by Bunk Spencer (manager for Charlie Warren, owner of the Alamo Hueco or U-Bar on this side of the line also) that Andreas was there at the neighboring ranch. What the men on this side did not know was that he *had* been there but was now with Frank Stidham's Juan Flores, heading back into the States. Frank and Dave Parker had kept their plans too quiet, and the fellows in the

cars had no way of knowing that the trap was set for the fox at the line and that he was about to take his last bait.

Andreas jumped to his feet, asking Juan what all those car lights meant, but Juan was also in the dark because he didn't think Frank would be so careless as to give away his plans. Andreas said the deal was off, and although Juan begged and talked till well after midnight, Andreas faded into the night, walking. He said horses made too much noise; he would rather go slowly, but quietly.

So next morning, Juan rode into Frank's ranch alone. When Frank and the cowboys also rode in from the trap at the line, Juan told them how close they had come to having Andreas. It was a bitter pill to swallow. They knew the same plan would never work again. Once suspicious, Andreas would never risk coming out anymore. The cars went in on the tip from Bunk Spencer, but too late, of course, as the rooster had flown.

Weeks and months went by, with small bunches of cowboys and neighbors making secret horseback trips into the Sierra Madre, where they searched and waited for Andreas to show. Suddenly they either gave up on ever finding him, or else they were successful. Cowboys can be "bull throwers" or very close-mouthed. Some say he was found, tried, hanged, and left in Mexico. Others say Andreas died two years later in 1918 at the Chimaneo Colonia, maybe of influenza.

The Parkers had sent a Mexican into Mexico (on salary) to stay until he found Andreas. Dink Parker during World War I was stationed at Ft. Bliss near El Paso. Mike Sims, my brother, was there too, sergeant at the remount station, and had a small office near the corrals. After two years of searching and spying, this Mexican came out of Mexico through Juarez and to Mike's office, looking for Dink. He said it was very important, so Mike had him wait there and went himself for Dink. The Mexican then told them that he had been to Andreas' wake. By drinking and being friendly, he had managed to get a good look in the coffin and there was *no doubt* of the corpse's being Andreas. Since that information terminated his job, there is a good possibility of its being true.

---

### Trailin' Down to Nebraska

*(Continued from page 43)*

I went over and we loaded up the hay wagon. We put a triple wagon box in the center of the hayrack. Then we loaded the things that must not get wet into the wagon box. He had ordered a straight wall tent and sheet-iron stove. In fact, he had things so near lined up that I didn't see why he needed me.

He and his wife and I made a list of things—mostly plenty of rope, some repairs for harness, extra in case of breakage, some horse hobbles, a few sacks of oats, and plenty of groceries. Armstrong went to Philip and got everything we needed, including two more log chains and some long spikes to use for tent stakes in case we had to set our tent on frozen ground.

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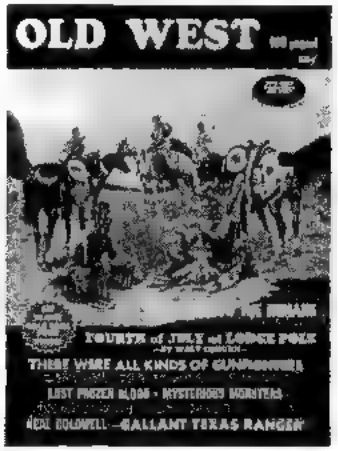
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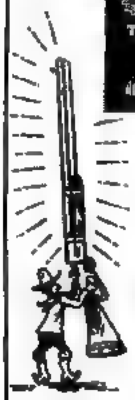

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In order to keep to smoother travel and avoid creek crossings we headed nearly due east. He had two men, Ben and Ed, and the horses were a quiet bunch, several fair saddle horses. The first night we camped four miles south of my place. We had driven about fifteen miles. We had to push the cattle and at times had to stop and hold the horses for a catch-up of the cattle. The riders certainly were neither cowboys nor wranglers but they were good fellows and we got along fine.

At this point we were directly north of Powell. There we crossed the Northwestern Railroad tracks and Bad River, which was down to a mere trickle. There was a bridge for the vehicles.

When we cut down to about ten miles a day, the 100 head of horses learned to take it at about the right gait. They seldom got over half a mile ahead, then would stop and graze. The wind was cold and raw but we were quite snug at night. We always stopped early, hobbled about ten horses and picketed three saddle horses. We bedded the cattle, then went in and ate a good supper, played pitch for a while, and slept. Breakfast was over as soon as it was light enough to see. Both the boy and Harry led a saddled horse alongside. Mrs. Armstrong was handy. If Harry thought it was expedient to ride, she would watch the four-horse team and tie her own team to the back of the wagon.

THE THIRD or fourth day out we hit White River. It was running about hub deep, with some ice near the banks, but we had no trouble. We drove the horses over, then the cattle. That took care of the little ice build-up near the banks. We were now on an Indian reservation and I told Harry he would probably have to forfeit a beef.

An Indian trail led up Pass Creek. It looked like a bad storm was approaching. We talked it over as to whether we should just camp there in the bottom until morning. We waited an hour to see how the storm looked, but it lightened up a bit so we pulled up a deep-cut sandy road, a hard pull for the horses. It was getting dark by the time we got to the top of the breaks. We made our latest camp of the entire trip that night. It was snowing hard by the time we had our tent up and our stock taken care of. We were on nearly level land and the wind was swirling the snow so hard we couldn't see a thing. All of us were tired and we went to bed as soon as supper was over and the dishes washed.

Morning broke but the blizzard raged on. Ben jumped out of bed and built a fire. The tent was nice and warm when I got up. "Well," Harry said, "what do we do now?"

"We just sit tight till this is over," I replied. "Ben and Ed can give our three saddle horses on picket a little feed of oats." We were out of grain but had bought four sacks of oats at Belvidere. I added, "I am a man of leisure today. I will read a book."

Ben came in and said, "She is sure wound up out there. I can't see ten feet and our wood is all gone but this little armload." That was sure a boner on my part. I should have checked on the wood supply.

"Well," I laughed, "I will get some wood and then it's up to you boys to cut it."

Mrs. Armstrong looked out the tent-flap and said, "You will get no wood in this storm."

"Oh, yes, I will," I promised her. I was putting on my coat and overshoes.

But she shook her head. "We will just have to save what wood we have to cook meals with and sit and shiver the rest of the time. You can't get any wood in this storm. There is no wood to be gotten."

That was the first time I had seen her show any temper, I looked out the tent flap and tried to make a joke of it. "I have always heard that hardwood furniture makes good fuel in emergencies," I said, but Mrs. Armstrong wasn't amused.

I dragged my saddle out of the snow and put it on a big roan horse. All I took extra was a pair of fence pliers. Then I shuffled through the snow till I could feel the deep-cut wagon ruts. I knew we had traveled along an Indian fence for about one-fourth of a mile after we got on top and that the fence had cedar posts. I struggled along; couldn't see a thing. At what I thought was about one-fourth mile I turned square off the road and walked about two rods. I found no fence. I made it back to the road and continued on north, feeling with my feet. Then I tried to locate the fence again. This time I was successful. I pulled the staples on four big cedar posts. It seemed the wire was on the inside of the posts. I think it must have been a drift fence instead of a pasture fence. I dropped my loop over the top of a post, got on and hit a lope before the rope tightened. It cracked the post off just at the top of the ground. I did this three more times, then I half-hitched the posts so they would drag in a long string. I walked down the road, still feeling the track with my feet. The wagon wasn't over ten feet from the trail so I found it all right.

I took the rope off the posts, piled them up, loosened my cinch and was glad to get in that tent again. When I got in I cleared my face of snow, looked around and remarked, "Well, the stuff is unloaded. You can cut up the dresser first. It will make a good fire."

Mrs. Armstrong didn't say a word but she was sure mad. We could hear wood splitting. Soon Ed came in with the nicest cedar wood cut in about eight-inch lengths, as the little stove took small pieces. When the lady saw that wood she fairly exploded, said she had heard of a lot of dirty tricks played but that was the worst ever. Harry was gloomy but even he laughed.

"I thought you were surely lost," he said, "and I was getting worried. Never thought of that fence until Ed brought in the cedar."

THE NEXT MORNING was cold, with a lot of frost in the air and about a fifteen-mile-an-hour wind making a kind of ground blizzard. We brushed the snow off our horses, saddled and started out.



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We soon hit burned-over ground. We crossed about two miles of this before coming to a deep draw. All cattle and horse tracks were obliterated, so it was just "spread out and ride southeast."

In this deep draw we found the cattle. There was a little browsing on brush. There were no horses. I told Ed and Ben to take the cattle back to the wagon as there was some grazing up there. I headed on southeast and made up my mind that I had missed the horses somewhere.

My pony was tired and I figured I was about twenty miles from our camp. Just at that time I saw lights come on suddenly as darkness fell. I headed for these lights but was stopped short by a high wire fence with barbed wire on top. I couldn't see a gate. The fence was a tough one and looked like it was a long one. I couldn't tear that fence down. The posts looked like they were ten-inch posts about eight feet high.

I was disgusted so I picked up the North Star, placed it so it just missed my right shoulder, and headed northwest hoping to hit our tent twenty miles away. After what seemed like hours, I hit a deep draw. I figured this was the one we found the cattle in, but where I was it wasn't as deep as where we had found the cattle so I headed downstream. In about half a mile I found the cattle tracks. These I followed. At last my horse stumbled across the deep-cut road. I followed this just a short distance and a dim but definite light showed up. It was the tent. They had left a lantern burning.

I slipped the saddle off my horse and clawed at the tent flap. Of course, it was tied on the inside, but Ben heard me and untied it. As I entered he said, "Any luck?"

"Not a horse," I answered.

"Well, we saved some supper." Ben felt the coffee pot and said, "Still warm but not hot."

I learned later that it was the lights of the Black Pipe Indian Agency that I had seen.

The next morning wasn't bad; it had warmed up quite a bit. We knew that the horses must be somewhere west of where the cattle were found so we just rode down the creek. About two miles away we found horse tracks. It wasn't long until the tracks cut to the north up out of the creek into some pine-clad hills. The horses were all together.

We were back at camp for a late dinner. While Mrs. Armstrong and I were sparring over burning her furniture, she said they would probably lose half their cattle. I bet her a pound of chocolates that they wouldn't lose a single animal. We had twenty miles yet to go. (She bought the chocolates at Cody, Nebraska, when we passed there a day or so later.)

Harry had bought a "Kin-Kade" homestead on one of those lake-flat hay meadows—a big sod house, barns and corrals. It was an old-time ranch but I have forgotten the name and brand of the former owner. Ed wanted to look around for a location for himself so we went farther south, seven miles I think, to a post office.

Coming down we didn't see an Indian


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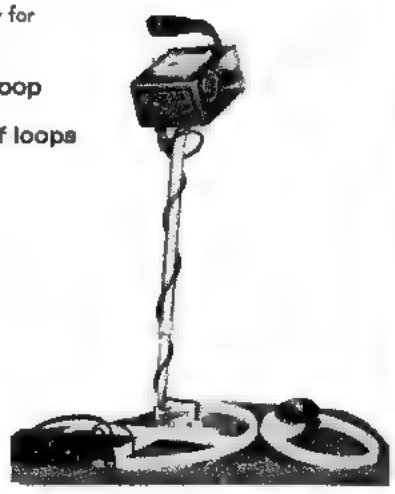

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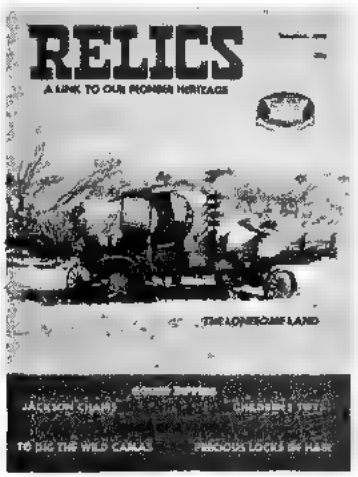


This is just a sampling of what you will find in the Summer 1969 Issue.

- **THE SAGA OF A SADDLE**
  By Joseph G. Rosa
- **CHILDREN'S TOYS**
  By Clarence T. Hubbard
- **THE LONESOME LAND**
  (Ranch Relics)
  By Ruth Camarillo
- **GOURD DIPPERS**
  By Olivia E. Myers
- **JACKSON CHAIRS**
  (Homemade Furniture)
  By G. K. Martin
- **PRECIOUS LOCKS OF HAIR**
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  By Sharon D. Watson
- **TO DIG THE WILD CAMAS**
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  By Roscoe LeGresley

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but going back we hit a better road and saw Indians all the way. Well, we pulled into Midland, and there we parted. Ed went west to Philip and I northwest to my ranch. I got home in time for a big Thanksgiving dinner.

I never saw any of my trail-drive bunch again, except for Walter, the boy. About 1918, while I was in the sheriff's office in Philip, Walter came there and hunted me up. Walter said his Dad had quit ranching, sold out, and was railroading again. I guess in a way we made a cold trip for nothing.

---

### Hell at 1200 Feet!

*(Continued from page 41)*

no one was certain since he hadn't been seen in several hours. His fate was learned for sure late that afternoon when his body was found in a side drift not far from the shaft, still standing erect, supported by his arm which was wrapped around an air pipe. He was only seventeen years old. When the long day ended, twenty-five bodies had been recovered and taken to Park City's two undertaking parlors. By then the cause of the awful blast was known.

JOHN BURGEE had been the powder monkey on the night shift. It was his job to measure out the blasting powder and fuse for each miner. The well-stocked powder magazine was located on the 1,200′ level. Exactly what happened could never be learned but it was surmised that Burgee either knocked a candle into the charges he was preparing or else he had been smoking and live ashes fell into the blasting powder. Apparently he had tried to escape for when the 1,200′ level could again be entered, pieces of clothing and bits of leather were found clinging to the smashed timber near a side drift which he had apparently tried to reach. One shoe with a foot still in it was found.

The horror still wasn't over, for while the search at the Daly-West Mine was underway a gruesome discovery was made at the nearby Ontario Mine. Only an hour after the awful blast at the Daly-West, Ken Crawford, a miner at the Ontario, was lowered to the 1,200′ level to check some ore cars. As he made his way from car to car in the narrow tunnel he came upon the body of George Garvin.

As Crawford knelt by his friend's side he was almost overcome by fumes but managed to crawl to the fresher air at the shaft and sound the alarm. Bill Campbell, shift boss, his brother Sandy Campbell, Mac Norton, and Crawford returned to where Garvin's body had been discovered, but the fumes were too strong for further search. An alarm was given for men at every level to get out of the mine, and foreman Matt Conley was summoned to organize a rescue party.

William Zweifel was found dead in an air tunnel connecting the 1,200′ levels of the Ontario and Daly-West Mines, while Steve Baratta and Wade Gladski were discovered dead in an adjoining working. Chris Sandrup was found alive but died before he reached fresh air. Four other miners were found on the 1,200′ level where they had been killed without warning.

The natural flow of underground air currents from the Daly-West had carried the poison gases into the Ontario workings and out the 600′ level drain tunnel to the surface. The deadliness of the invisible fumes was felt even on the surface when a horse which was standing near the mouth of the drain tunnel suddenly dropped dead when the fumes reached it. When a final count of the dead was made it was learned that thirty-four men had died, twenty-five at the Daly-West and nine at the Ontario.

Although workman's compensation laws were then unheard of, the Daly-West Company did everything it could to ease the burden for families of the dead miners. Each family which had lost a father, husband, or son was given $2,000. In addition, $500 was allotted for each orphaned child. Families of single men received $1,000. Monuments were placed on each of the graves, also.

After the terrible tragedy at the Daly-West Mine the State of Utah quickly passed laws forbidding the storage of explosives in underground powder magazines to insure that such a disaster would never happen again.

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### Trails Grown Dim

*(Continued from page 1)*

trunk. I have traced my great-great-grandfather, William Taylor, from Illinois back to Kentucky but I cannot find any trace of his family in Kentucky. He married Elizabeth (?) and had three sons, John M., William E., and my great-grandfather, James A. Taylor. He then moved to Illinois in 1830. James A. Taylor married Polly Davis in Sangamon County, Illinois but I can find no trace of who her parents were. Any help from anyone will be appreciated.—Mrs. G. Funston Bilbrey, R 2 824 North 5th, Frederick, Oklahoma 73542

#### Stockton

Does anyone know of a girl from Guthrie, Oklahoma who married Floyd Stockton about 1921 or 1922? I do not know the girl's maiden name but she had an aunt by the name of Dollie who lived in Kansas about 1923. Floyd was just out of the Navy when they married and for some reason they separated after the birth of their child.—Mildred Brandt, 16182 West 13th Avenue, Golden, Colorado 80401

#### George B. Vallandigham

George B. Vallandigham went to Valley City, North Dakota in 1879 to start the *Northern Pacific Times* for a doctor. Later he started the *North Dakota Democrat* and later changed it to the *North Dakota Patriot*. I would like to hear from any person who knew George and his family from his first marriage. I also would like to hear from anyone who knows if any children from this first marriage are still living and where. I would like to hear from anyone who worked for Mr. Vallandigham.—Patrick E. Bousquet, 567 El Lado Drive, (Phone 527-1642), Simi, California 93065

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# WESTERN BOOK ROUNDUP

**By The Old Bookaroos**

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**We do not handle the books reviewed below. If interested in purchasing, please check your local bookstore, or address your order to the individual publisher in care of this office and we will be glad to forward.**

### LIFE ON THE CIRCLE C

Walt Coburn's *Pioneer Cattleman in Montana* (University of Oklahoma Press, $6.95) is the story of the Circle C Ranch owned by his father, Robert Coburn. The Circle C was located near the Little Rockies between the Milk and Missouri Rivers—Robert Coburn acquired it from the great pioneer cowman Granville Stuart. Walt spent his summers on the Circle C and his winters at the family home in Great Falls so he could attend school. In 1957 he wrote *Stirrup High*, a most fitting introduction to this fuller account of his own life on the range and of the family ranching operations over a thirty-year period, 1886-1916. There is much about the Wild Bunch in this book but this reader found Walt's account of ranch life even more fascinating. Walt's three older half-brothers, Will, Bob and Wallace, had but little time for the button but Horace Brewster, the ranch foreman, was his guide, philosopher and friend. Walt credits Brewster with teaching him "whatever I knew about punching cows." This was an exciting era in Montana range history—Walt does a great job of setting it forth. There are some fine family and range photos and a folding illustration in color of the painting Charles M. Russell did of Walt's three half-brothers. This reviewer believes this may be the first appearance in print of this particular Russell painting. The appendix reprints some additional material on the Wild Bunch—some were former hands on the Circle C, and there is an index. Highly recommended and for those who want an added touch, Walt tells us that he has supplied a number of book dealers with a printed autograph sticker with a steer head sketch by a young artist, Cynthia Rigden of a pioneer Arizona ranching family. Ask for it.

### LIFE IN ARIZONA

John Henry Thomson moved from Texas to Arizona in 1880 when he was nineteen. He built a cabin under the Mogollon Rim and established a small ranch based on 160 acres on Webber Creek. It was not long until the beautiful country in which Thomson settled was torn by Indian uprisings, the famous Graham-Tewksbury feud, and an era of outlawry. In 1889 Glenn Reynolds, Sheriff of Gila County, was murdered by the Apache Kid. Jerry Ryan, his appointed successor, drowned soon after. Thomson was appointed to the unexpired term of sheriff and began a career as lawman that is now a Southwestern legend. *Sheriff Thomson's Day—Turbulence in the Arizona Territory* (University of Arizona Press, $4.95) by Jess G. Hayes is the latest "Southwest Chronicle." Hayes was born in Globe in 1901 and grew up to become school superintendent of Gila County, a position he held until his death in 1968. Hayes knew Thomson personally and remembered some of the gory events that transpired in the area, particularly the hanging in Globe of John B. Goodwin in 1913 and his partner William Stewart in 1914. Earle Stanley Gardner aptly stated in the foreword, "Jess G. Hayes puts a lot of work into his books and the results of this work is authentic accuracy as well as entertainment of a high level." Other books by Hayes are *Boots and Bullets, Apache Vengeance*, and *And Then There Were None*. Hayes died August 6, the day after checking the proof of this last book. Highly recommended.

### MISSOURI TRAVELS

*The River and I* (Bison Books, $1.95) by John G. Neihardt was reproduced by arrangement with the author from the first edition published in 1910. The author was commissioned in 1908 by Casper Whitney, editor of *Outdoor Magazine*, to take a trip down the Missouri River and write a series of articles. The resulting book was highly acclaimed by critics of the day and has long been out of print. Neihardt spent fifty-six days on the trip taking pictures and writing his impressions of people, places, and the river. Fifty photographs are included. In Neihart's words—"I never felt at home in a town. Up River when night dropped over me, somehow I always felt comfortably, kindly housed." This is the fourth Neihardt book to be added to the B. B. brand.

### THE YUMA OUTPOST

*Fort Yuma on the Colorado River* (Privately printed by the author, 1111 Vista Grande Road, El Cajon, Calif. 92020, $2.75) is by Col. H. B. Wharfield, U. S. A. F., Retired. This is the Colonel's fifth book about Arizona forts and soldiers and one of the best. He has made excellent use of the official reports and records and provides much information about the officers and men who served at Fort Yuma from 1850 until it was closed by executive order in 1884. Fort Yuma was an important outpost—and while located on the California side of the Colorado it has been chiefly associated in our memories with Arizona history. The 49ers using the southern route to the gold fields had much trouble with the Indians at the Colorado crossing—the Boundary Commission used it and later the Butterfield Stage and the famed Camel Corps. The California Column enroute to New Mexico during the Civil War used Yuma as a supply center and it was from the Fort that the upper Colorado was explored. Colonel Wharfield's account is worthwhile, and maps and photos supplement the text.

### FOLKSONGS OF THE SAINTS

*Mormon Songs from the Rocky Mountains* (University of Texas Press, $7.00), edited by Thomas E. Cheney is "a compilation of Mormon folksongs", and was published for the American Folklore Society in its Memoir Series. Cheney is professor of English at Brigham Young University and is an active member of the Mormon Church. The Mormons are noted as a singing church, but the songs presented in this volume will not be rendered by the famed Tabernacle Choir. Humorous, sometimes a little ribald, and often containing an historical truth, the songs in this book add to the color of the Mormons, considered by many to be rather stuffy—e.g.

*"Now all of you men of science,*
*don't strain your eager eyes*
*Viewing the planets that deck the*
*distant skies,*
*For nature has more wonders than*
*all you could explore;*
*A telescope is nothing to the key-*
*hole in the door."*

### HE FOUND MILES!

General Nelson A. Miles, a Civil War hero and brigadier general at age twenty-five, efficient and successful Indian fighter, was General of the Army during the Spanish-American War. He pioneered many advances in military tactics and equipment. He campaigned successfully against the Sioux, the Nez Percé and the Apaches. In spite of his remarkable career, little has been written about this military giant who believed in racial equality, anti-imperialism, and justice for the Indians. Miles has been snubbed by historians as he was ignored and even snubbed by national leaders during his career. *The Search for General Miles* (G. P. Putnam's Sons, $5.95) by Newton F. Tolman is a frankly prejudiced but an illuminating biography of General Miles. Tolman became interested in the general while researching the history of Westminster, Massachusetts, Miles' home town. The great lack of information about the general aroused the author's imagination. Why was so great a figure overlooked by historians? This book reveals an efficient, confident, and successful man who reached the pinnacle of military success but was overshadowed by such colorful but less successful contemporaries as Custer, Crook and Howard.



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## Truly Western

*(Continued from page 4)*

Illinois. They are buried in a small country cemetery southeast of New Boston. Their brother, Tom Carter, was a barber here in Bucklin, Missouri. All three brothers served in World War I. I hope this helps someone bring back the old days as it did Mr. Hinkle. Someone might shed some more light on these boys and know more than I do. But I will try my best to help anybody who wants to know anything about Linn County, Missouri. —Charles R. Ritchie, Box 345, Bucklin, Missouri 64631

### Fierce Trouble on Rodger-P

Dear Sir:

I am writing in regard to a letter written in the town of West, Texas by A. P. West to my grandfather, J. O. Ford, dated July 18, 1893.

I would like to know the particulars of the shootout and any information on the people involved. I would like to know what the Rodger-P stands for.

The letter says in part: "I saw an account in the Chicago *Globe* where they had quite a fierce trouble on Rodger-P a short time ago. The trouble was between four men, Mr. Batson, Oneal, Ford and McOver. Tell me the particulars of the case and what Ford it was and what Oneal. It said they were all men of family and I suppose it was James the one that killed a man some years ago. John Oneal I can not place such a man of family."

Maybe some of your readers would be so kind as to let me know what happened and to whom.—Frank Ford, Box 131, San Andreas, California 95249

### Oregon's Gold Sands

Dear Sir:

This is the first time I have ever written a letter of this kind, but after reading the story, "Sands of Gold," I thought I must. I was born and raised in Marshfield. My father, James L. Ferrey, was a pioneer hotel man, having opened the Blanco Hotel in 1873. I was a small girl when I listened to the early-day tales told around the old pot-bellied stove in the hotel office, because I spent much time on my dad's lap, listening. I had a small vial of flake gold and dust that one of the old-timers had given to me, which he had panned at Gold Beach, or rather Whiskey Run. The town (?) of Randolph as I remember it was on the Bandon side of the Coquille River, and an old gentleman named Adam Pershbaker had a small sawmill there. I knew him well as he and my father were very close friends—so close in fact that if either were a little short of funds temporarily, he would write to the other, tell him what he needed, and the next day the lender made the trip with the cash money. No note or other security was ever needed. Then when the borrower returned the money on the date set, he made the trip with the cash.

Farther up the Coquille River my uncle, Joseph Ferrey, owned and operated a coal mine. I knew all that country very well—long before the "new breed" came and the first thing they did was change the name of the town. The name Marshfield suited very well as most of the town was marsh. An overland trip from Marshfield to Drain to the railroad was always very interesting, to say the least, especially in winter with a good storm going.—Mrs. Henrietta Ferrey Minter, 541 Medford Ave., Hayward, California 94541

### Carving in a Remote Cabin

Dear Joe:

While prospecting this past summer on Sheep Creek about forty miles east of Homer, Alaska my two sons and I ran onto an old cabin. Lying inside on a bunk made of grass we found a stretching board (used to stretch raw furs) that had been hewn out of a piece of cottonwood. On the board in good handwriting and inscribed with a lead pencil was this message: "1935—Was here on Oct. 29, saw four bears and saw tracks of five more at least. Can do nothing here so going home tomorrow. H. Olsen—Again on Nov. 17 and 18, set 7 B.T. and 10 S.N." The "bt" was probably beaver or bear traps and the "sn" was probably snares.

In 1935 this place was far from civilization and even today it is twenty miles to the nearest road. And there are still plenty of bears there now. Since the cabin was built out in a point of land in a sharp bend in the creek in a heavy stand of timber, I don't believe anyone has found it since the message was left there because everything was intact, including the message, although the bears had pretty well wrecked the roof and walls. A person approaching this bend from either up or down the creek could not see the cabin and would naturally cut across the point of land to hit the creek on the opposite side. I also doubt that Olsen ever returned after writing that last message.

The cabin was only about six feet by six feet but a person could see that the man who built it had taken great pains in hewing out the boards and fitting them in place.

I am wondering if any of your readers would have any information on H. Olsen, or maybe he is still living. It would be interesting to find out more about him.—W. S. Jones, Star Route A, Homer, Alaska 99603

### Maggie and the Nez Percés

Dear Sir:

My father's folks moved to Cottonwood, Idaho in 1881, four years after the Nez Percé war. My father, R. E. Bruner, told me an interesting story many years ago, long before I saw it in print. When he started to school in 1882 on Camas Prairie, one of the schoolchildren was Maggie Manual. Her folks lived in White-Bird Canyon and were one of the first families attacked by the Indians at the beginning of the war.

As I remember, Maggie told my father that when the Indians attacked the Manual home, the father was killed trying to protect his family. The mother took Maggie and ran out in the brush to hide but the Indians saw the mother and chased her. She hid the girl and ran but she was caught and killed. Her body never was found.

After the massacre an old prospector looking for survivors heard the little girl crying out in the brush. He picked her up and started for Mount, Idaho. Before he reached Mount he ran into Indians. They were going to kill him but the old man, who had been at one time a sailor and had a cross tattooed on his chest, opened his shirt and showed them the cross. The Nez Percés, being religious or maybe superstitious, respected the cross and allowed him to go through unharmed. Dad went to school several years with Maggie Manual, and one thing for sure, she always hated the Indians.—Paul E. Bruner, Valier, Montana 59486

TUMBLEWEEDS
—by Tom K. Ryan
BEWARE OF THE PEPPER POX! WARN THE CHIEF!
BEWARE OF THE PEPPER POX! WARN THE CHIEF!
BEWARE OF THE PEPPER POX! WARN THE CHIEF!
BEWARE OF THE PEPPER POX! WARN THE CHIEF!
BEWARE! BEWARE OF THE PEPPER POX!
I WISH THEY'D STOP DOING ME FAVORS



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